

THE CITY OF ANTIQUITY – p. 4

It is said that Midyat has been abandoned by its inhabitants, lain in ruins for long periods, and been rebuilt seven times. There is no scientific documentation regarding how and when these events occurred. The number seven is a holy number in the Babylonian religious culture, but it may be true that the community of Midyat has been abandoned by its inhabitants. War, forced displacement, and severe diseases like plague and cholera have been recurring in different time periods.

Tur Abdin lies on a plateau, and the bedrock consists of several layers of black rock cliffs extending over large areas. Therefore, no water springs exist. The population was forced to save rainwater in hand-hewn stone wells for the livelihood of both themselves and their livestock. In years when it did not rain enough, the population was forced to move to the nearest water sources for survival. This natural phenomenon recurred at 20 to 40-year intervals. Natural drought periods could last several years in a row, resulting in poverty and starvation.

The oldest documents telling of the countryside are from the 13th century BC. It is told, among other things, that the Assyrian King Shalmaneser II invaded the entire Tur Abdin area and annexed the entire region to his kingdom. People sentenced to community service and similar punishments were sent to the mountains for hard physical labor in the wide landscape, plowing vineyards and cutting down massive forests. It is also said that the name Tur Abdin, "The Mountain of the Servants," comes from this time period. Among the populated communities mentioned in history from this time, Midyat is mentioned as "METYATE." "Moth, yoth" – my home village. Patriarch Aphrem Barsoum wrote in "The History of Tur Abdin" that the population in the area was *oromoye* "mgushe," i.e., uncivilized. The word "mgushe," which appears in religious scriptures, still lives in our everyday language as *maghisho-ghashimo*, meaning deceived or naive. However, the population living in Tur Abdin was well civilized.

Multi-millennial sun god worship with its sanctuaries was the indigenous population's largest religion in Tur Abdin, and people here lived in harmony with different religions. Upon the arrival of Christianity in Tur Abdin, there were hundreds of empty sanctuaries throughout the region. All monasteries and churches are built on these areas. Excavations that the people of Midyat carried out in the 1940s revealed that when the people began building the current churchyard south of Mor Abrohom's monastery, ancient house foundations, large and small water wells, and storage pits for food preservation were found under meters-high layers of soil. It was likely the first Midyat community—a connected farmstead consisting of about fifty houses with associated stables and caves.

In the mid-5th century, the Byzantine occupation forces forced the people of Midyat, like the entire Tur Abdin population, to convert to Christianity. During the same period, the Mor Ahisnoyo Church was built on an old sanctuary. However, the church was not named Mor

Ahisnoyo until the 8th century. The church was also called the Great Church in everyday speech because it was Midyat's largest church.

The person Ahisnoyo, whose name means "the stranger," was born in Bethgarmay (Cilmeri in Turkish)—a village south of the city of Hakkari. As a young man, Ahisnoyo came to Tur Abdin and settled, according to legend, in the village of Bethsorino, from where he later moved to Midyat. Ahisnoyo worked as a monk and was very popular among the youth of his time. Mor Ahisnoyo eventually became a bishop and later, during the 6th century, also Patriarch of the entire Syriac Orthodox Church. He went down in history as "Mor Philoxenus of Mabbug". During his time, the Patriarchate was located in the city of Urhoy, present-day Urfa in Turkey. Mor Ahisnoyo and two other bishops who strongly opposed the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon were arrested in Constantinople and sentenced to death by strangulation.

Mor Ahisnoyo was to be buried in the village of Bethsorino. On the way to the village, the caravan stopped in Midyat, and according to legend, a great quarrel broke out between the people of Midyat and the inhabitants of Bethsorino over where the Patriarch should be buried. The battle ended with several dead and injured. The incident took place south of Midyat in 523 AD, and the place was named "Baslutho," meaning "the prayer place," beth-Slutho. Large stones, about ten meters high, still stand at the site. The stones may symbolize the number of those who fell during the mentioned fight.

During the 1960s, the residents of the Zette Tjalma district erected a small monument near the stones to commemorate this historical event. After prolonged negotiations and efforts by the clergy, the Patriarch's remains were divided between Midyat and Bethsorino. The final decision was that the skull would remain in Midyat while the rest of the remains would be moved to Bethsorino. The Patriarch's skull was kept in a shrine in the Great Church in Midyat until the 12th century. During religious festivals, the monks carried the small shrine on their shoulders and led the ceremonies, hoping that the skull would bring good fortune to the Christian population in Midyat. During one of many plundering raids carried out by the Kurdish-Muslim Bohtan people in the 1100s, everything in the church was destroyed, and even the patriarch's skull disappeared in connection with the event.

The Great Church and the population have been subjected to raids throughout history. At the end of the 1300s, Tamerlane (Timur Lenk) destroyed the Great Church and plundered everything in it. The church lay in ruins until the 1960s.

The Mor Hobil Monastery was built in the 500s during the golden age of Christianity, as it is called by religious historians. Mor Hobil was a Midyat son, and initially, the monastery was named after him. Later, a main prayer hall with a higher roof was built south of the monastery, and the new church was named after one of Mor Hobil's successors, Mor Abrohom. According to legend, Mor Abrohom was from Constantinople. After a few more years, yet another church was built south of the large chapel, and this third church was named after the Virgin Mary.

The Mor Abrohom Monastery, a castle-like structure, was the greatest masterpiece of its time and had several buildings around the large courtyard. Parts of the monastery were destroyed during multiple hostile attacks, while other parts collapsed over time. The monastery's prayer halls escaped Tamerlane's attacks with minor damage, but the southern gable was completely destroyed. The wall was rebuilt by the people of Midyat long after the destruction.

The saint Mor Hobil's grave lay in front of the altar on the left side of the entrance to the church. In the 1930s, when the Turkish military's sixth artillery company "Altıncı Alay" violently took over the monastery and used it as a stable, the grave was destroyed to make room for the horses. The saint's remains were thrown into the garbage heap outside the monastery. The people of Midyat could not find the saint's remains to build a new grave with them but erected a gravestone next to the original site in memory of the saint.

During the internal conflicts of Christian history, several churches and sanctuaries were built around Midyat:

- The St. Mary Monastery, a stone's throw from the Great Church
- The Mor Sharbel Monastery in northern Midyat
- The Mort Shmuni Church in the 1600s
- A small chapel just north of Mort Shmuni named Mor Zokhe
- In the last century, Mor Barsaumo in the Melke Mire district and Mor Sharbel in northern Midyat

In the mid-1500s, a smaller Catholic church was built in western Midyat. Today, the city's old mosque stands there. In 1393 and 1402, Tamerlane passed through Tur Abdin with his army, terrorizing and destroying everything in his path throughout the region. In Midyat, the entire roof of the Great Church was torn down, and Bishop Malkeo and many Christian youths from Midyat were murdered.

Under Islamic rule, Midyat was under the protection of the Caliphate, and the inhabitants paid taxes to the Caliphate administration in Baghdad until the 1400s. Under Ottoman rule, Midyat was connected to the so-called Kurdish emirates of Gziro. There are many myths and stories about these emirates.

SOCIAL GOVERNANCE – p. 7

There were some amusing and a great deal of sad and bitter stories about the social governance. It is said that the Emir's court officials and the people around him were mostly Christians and that the Emir had a group of elderly Christian men as personal advisors. In the seventeenth century, the Emir wrote in a letter to his cousin in the city of Bitlis that his entire residence subsisted on his obedient Christians and that the Christians throughout Tur Abdin were enterprising and loyal to him in every way. In the early 19th century, relations with the people of Tur Abdin, and especially the people of Midyat, became increasingly strained.

In the 1840s, an army from the Gziro region came through Tur Abdin and terrorized the villagers in the area through their ravages. Below Midyat, at a place called Tceno, they met

an elderly farmer named Shabo Shushe. The robbers were horsemen, and Shabo was a poor Christian farmer completely unprepared for their violence. A small tumult arose between Shabo and the robbers, and quite unexpectedly, Shabo lifted his shotgun and aimed at them to protect himself against their violence. The bandits did not believe that Shabo was capable of shooting at the Emir's people, and one of them commanded him to throw down the weapon and let himself be captured. Shabo replied that he would not obey their orders and that he would shoot down anyone who attacked him. Completely insanely, one of the robbers lifted his sword and aimed at Shabo to behead him. But before the man could deliver the blow, Shabo fired a shot that hit the bandit in the chest. The man fell from his horse and died. The other robbers managed to overpower Shabo and killed him in a bestial manner.

The robbers then vented their anger by attacking the people of Midyat and senselessly killing anyone who crossed their path on Midyat's streets. On the upper commercial street, some youths gathered and responded with stones from the rooftops against the intruders. Two youths, Anter from the Sefer family and Malke from the Bitte family, were murdered. The murder of the youths and the farmer Shabo initiated a large resistance movement against the Emir and his rule. Christian youths from neighboring villages joined the movement and came to Midyat's aid. Even certain Kurdish tribes, such as the Shammika from Daline, took up arms to defend the people of Midyat. This was the beginning of the refusal to pay the so-called "cizye," the tax to the Gziro Emir.

A group of selected gentlemen, led by Saume dbe Shamun Saume, went to the Patriarch in Mardin and took the Patriarch with them to the Turkish governor in Amed (Diyarbakir). They officially reported the Gziro Emirs, the brothers Musur Beg and Azdin Sher, for arbitrary misrule and the murder of three men in Midyat. Several previous reports against the tyrant from Muslims in the area were already with the governor.

In 1854, an order came from the responsible minister Kavakli Pasha in Istanbul to arrest the brothers Musur Beg and Azdin Sher and sentence them to death. The sentence, which was carried out in a spectacular manner, ended the rule of these clan leaders for good. A large military force consisting of more than a thousand soldiers from the regular armed men, supported by at least as many local civilian militias hostile to the clan leaders, took up the chase after them. The operation began in Gziro and continued upstream along the western bank of the Tigris River at the height of Kerboran. The clan leaders, with their militia of just over a thousand men, turned westward through the difficult terrain. The clan militia destroyed and burned everything in their path. In Kerburan, they preyed on Christians and robbed the population of everything they could carry. The Garo family paid 80 gold *bassa* under threat of death for their lives (one gold *bassa* corresponded to 60 gold coins). The pursuit continued all the way to the village of Gercus (Kfargawze in Aramean). In the broad valley below the community, the parties clashed with two thousand armed militiamen on each side. A full-scale battle raged from early morning until nightfall. The war ended with the state power wiping out the entire Bohtan militia. More than a thousand Turks and one thousand five hundred Kurds from the Bohtan region died during this encounter. Musur Beg and Azdin Sher were captured and dragged with their hands tied behind their backs behind horses all the

way to Amed, where they were executed by hanging. The 550-year rule of the Gziro clans ended, and the clan leaders' lineage was erased from history forever.

At the time of the oppression from Bohtan against the people of Tur Abdin, the people of Midyat felt a strong anxiety about their existence and were forced to seek protection for their lives and property. The Nahrozo family, who lived in the village of Daline, traditionally had good relations with the Arameans throughout the region. The surrounding area feared the Nahrozo clan, which traditionally engaged in protective activities. The Grigo family from Midyat made an agreement with some men from the Nahrozo family and offered them housing and sustenance in exchange for these Muslim men protecting the lives and properties of the people of Midyat. The ancestor of the Nahrozo family was named Kaplano "Kappo." Initially, he lived in the caves below the Mor Abrohom Monastery to the left, three hundred meters from the main entrance. (The caves are still called "Kappo's caves" today.) Later, he and his family were given Mor Shamun Castle, which is still in their possession.

Kappo was strict in his role as protector but humble toward the people of Midyat. He had a humorous character and managed to get out of various difficult situations by joking about them. The protector was to guard the animals during the summer months in the fields and watch over the district's vineyards, which were at risk of theft. Kappo was a legendary figure, and many stories were told about him and his contacts with the surrounding community. According to the agreement, Kappo was to receive his salary in the form of food supplies. Each family was to pay him according to the number of livestock they owned. In addition to his salary, Kappo was to receive a loaf of bread and two eggs at each Easter. This well-established custom at Easter was not questioned, no matter how many livestock the family owned. Kappo complained about the size of the bread loaf and whether the eggs should be colored or raw. He did not want leftover eggs from the Easter holiday but tried to get fresh ones.

It was once told that some families went from the district where Kappo was their protector to the bishop and wanted him to ensure that this forced charity agreement was abolished. The families who complained to the bishop were heard, and Kappo stopped his unwelcome visits to the families during Easter.

Over time, Kappo began to become too tiresome for those around him. He walked around the district telling made-up horror stories that he had allegedly experienced the previous night. For example, that he had saved the family's best ox from a pack of wolves just in the nick of time, and that the Kurds would steal the family's watermelons if he did not chase the thieves away. Most of the stories were, of course, fabricated by himself, and he told them to put pressure on the inhabitants and emphasize the importance of his protective activities. For this "heroic" effort, he wanted this and that. Kappo's unfair attitude annoyed the common man in the community. The people of Midyat still use a saying that goes "i sikhlajdokh kshibho lisikhle d Kappo," which roughly means "now you are behaving exactly like Kappo."

Kappo Nahrozo was the first Kurdish Muslim to move in and settle in Midyat. This happened around the 1840s. But the Nahrozo clan and the people of Midyat traditionally had good

relations with each other. After a few years, the Ghanno clan brought another protector family to Midyat; the Mehmedo family, also from the village of Daline.

In the early 19th century, some families moved from Nineveh to Midyat. They were merchant families and were called "mousloje"; people from Mosul. They were mainly engaged in buying and selling goods in large quantities to near and far. The Mousloye families built two large inns with several shops on Midyat's main commercial street. Blacksmith workshops and other handicrafts expanded. This created jobs for the local population, and people began handling cash. Eventually, businesses within transport, hotels, and restaurant operations began to take shape. In a fairly short time, Midyat was transformed from a primitive farming village into a business metropolis for the entire region. Usury (lending with interest), which until then had been banned by the church, began to be more permitted within the business movement.

Midyat's old inhabitants, newly moved-in Christian businessmen, the occasional craftsman from surrounding areas, and Kurdish protector families lived side by side without major conflicts. This mosaic of about ten different cultures and four or five languages and dialects enriched the socio-cultural life in old Midyat. During the 1870s, Midyat's inhabitants doubled thanks to newly moved-in businessmen and craftsmen. The social gaps created by industrialism marked the beginning of clans starting to guard their own interests. The Mousloye clan built a school under the auspices of the new Protestant church.

The old Ottoman Empire's several hundred years of Sultanate rule was transformed in 1876 into a more democratic monarchical rule through the so-called *Meshrutiye* reform. The Sultan in Constantinople introduced a parliamentary rule in the country. The first parliament, or senate, which was to handle the empire's enormous problems, consisted of 110 members from the entire empire. 64 of the members were Muslims and 46 were Christians from various Christian groups. Through this reform, the minorities would also get their share of the power. In Midyat's case, the question was who would represent the state power and manage the local administration.

The Sefer family was the strongest and largest in Midyat in terms of both numbers and education. The Sefer clan ruled over both the Mort Shmuni Church and the bishopric. This irritated the other clans in Midyat.

Murder at the Square In the 1880s, a Yazidi-Kurdish man came one day with a young horse to the city's bazaar to sell it. The animal bazaar was then located at the small square north of the Mort Shmuni Church. It was a beautiful spring day, and on that particular day, an unusually large number of people had gathered at the small square. Some men gathered around the fine horse and examined it closely. Suddenly, a small quarrel arose between some market traders in a corner. Small arguments were not uncommon at bazaars, but this time the fight escalated and became a feud between the Sefer and Zette Tjalma families. Tjalma's youths participated.

A young man from the Sefer family named Use came to the square dressed up in long clothes and with a whip in his hand. Use acted tough. He used to walk around in military clothes and was therefore called "Osmanli" (Ottoman) by Midyat's youths. Use dealt the horse a whip blow, causing the horse to become frightened and run into one of the youths from the Tjalma clan. This caused a big fight between youths from both of these families. The fight ended with Use Sefer, in the chaos that ensued, being stabbed to death. Who exactly delivered the fatal blow to Use never became known to posterity. In any case, the Zette Tjalma family took the blame.

The murder created great unrest in the district, and the pressure from society on the Sefer family for a revenge action became too great. But the father of the Sefer family acted sensibly and diplomatically. With the Patriarch's envoy and the mediation of the local clergy, the parties agreed that the Tjalma family would leave the community and move to another location. They first fled to the village of Mzizah and then a little later a place called Kajasa, where they rebuilt an old abandoned farm and lived there for a few years.

It had been a few years since the incident at the square occurred, but the youth of the Sefer clan could not get over the "shame" they carried all the time since Use was stabbed. It simply was not possible to continue life without avenging Use's death. It had been more than ten years since the murder at the square when a young man from the Tjalma clan, who was also named Use, met the same fate. This murder put an end to the continued "vendetta" between the clans. It became one against one from each clan. This incident went down in history with the expression "Use badal Use," which means Use for Use. The Tjalma clan returned to their homes in Midyat, but the religious Ottoman influence took new momentum. The Mort Shmuni Church was completely under the control of the Sefer clan, and when the Tjalma clan realized they could not change this, they turned to the Catholic Church, which was on the rise throughout the region. Even some of the other families who were dissatisfied with their own church followed them. A Catholic congregation was established, and the new congregation built a church wall to wall east of the Mort Shmuni Church.

After the abolition of the Gziro "emirate" and the political change in 1876, Midyat gained more and more significance on the political map, partly due to its geographical location, partly because Midyat was the largest community for the Aramean-Christian ethnic group. A government office, which was to represent the Sultan in Istanbul, was established in Midyat, and Hanne Sefer received the position to represent the Sultan's authority in Midyat. His duties included, among other things, conducting inspections of the local defense forces on official occasions. Barsaumo Sefer, related to Hanne, also received the task of representing Midyat in the province's highest council with the governor—Mutasarruf—in Omid.

At the same time, a population registration bureau was started in Midyat. Isa Zette from the Tjalma clan was appointed as head of the authority. Isa Zette was literate. The municipal administration was assigned to the Mosuloye-Ninvoye clan, Shammas Circis, and Gelle Hirmiz, who held the office. One of the province's tax offices was established in Midyat during the same period. The operation required extensive administration and knowledge; to manage this office, the Saido clan was appointed. Kerimo from the Saido clan was

responsible for the authority, and after his death, his widow Hana took over. At that time, farmers paid taxes in kind, that is, in the form of grains and everything else the farmer produced. According to the account, Yade Hana Kerimo was an advisor in tax and enforcement matters with a very good reputation.

MIDYAT'S DISTRICTS – p. 12

The mentioned *Möbets* (officials/deputies) came to Midyat after the abolition of the Gziro "emirate" and the introduction of the *Meshrutiyet* system in 1876. Exactly which year and how the tasks were assigned to the establishment in Midyat is not known. This new order required a new population census to effectively collect taxes and to report for military service and other civic obligations. Why all the *Möbet* holders were killed in the Seyfo catastrophe and their archives completely vanished is unknown. In recent years' archival excavations in the city of Amed, some *Möbet* men appear in certain document fragments, in addition to the names mentioned above: Malke Shamosho-Hirmiz, Isa Gevriye-Rhavi, Shamun Savme-Kashro, Hanne Gulyagi-Kashro, Gavvo Latte-Bahdi. Most likely, the latter gentlemen were public officials in the county's governing council.

According to this new social order, Midyat was divided into twelve districts: eleven Christian and one Muslim. The districts were not geographically divided, and there were no street names or house numbers. Midyat was divided according to clan affiliation, and each clan had a strong male representative. Mostly, this was a priest or a deacon of higher rank. This division was likely colored by the religious culture following the Jewish people's twelve tribes model. During this time, religion was deeply rooted in the people's soul more than ever. The church had legal *Möbet* power, which is why religious representatives represented the people before the state power. Monks belonging to the diocese's metropolis were exempt from military service and did not pay tax. The clergy felt comfortable in these clothes, and in their confusion, they preached about the Jewish people being God's chosen people and constantly had the "bnaj Isroel" people as their role model.

What happened in the wide world was God's will, but what the entire Christian ethnic group in Tur Abdin suffered was, according to their own clergy, a collective punishment because they angered God with their deeds and that God, in his exercise of power, punished them for their faults.

Midyat's twelve officially registered districts "*mashritho*", "*sharbtho*" or "*shautho*" are the following:

GRI

Associated with the Grigo clan. Their district is the largest and oldest in Midyat and is geographically located north of the Shmuni Church. The Grigo clan constitutes Midyat's oldest known inhabitants. According to some stories, Grigo was a Greek *Möbet* man who established himself in the area at the time before Alexander the Great's conquests in the region or the time of the Roman Empire's occupation of the area upon the arrival of Christianity to the region. Historically, the Grigo clan took care of the Mor Abrohom

Monastery, which is a Byzantine creation, and managed its properties. This can also be assumed to be a reason to believe that this clan may be of Greek descent. Chori Isa Grigo was the clan's leading figure at the time of Seyfo. His son Gebro succeeded him, and Gebro succeeded Isa dbe Idjo as the formal leader of the clan. However, the Grigoites could not agree on one person as a representative, and the city's establishment perceived the Grigo clan as an outdated and tired lineage.

KASHROVAT Associated with the Kashroki clan. The clan lives in the northern district and north of the Grigo quarter. The Kashro clan originates, according to one version of history, from the village of Kaabiye near Omid. But according to other information, the family came from the city of Harput. The large Kashrovat clan consists of a number of families that grew in number and lived close to each other throughout history. The priest family Chori Gevriye represented the clan. Shamun dbe Saume, Eliyo-Illo Hadodo, Isa Avrohum Hadodo, Aziz Dahabe, and Ibrahim Sherro are known leading figures within the clan but also within the district. Probably, people from this district were more interested in supporting their families than competing for leadership. In our days, the whole district fought over who would become *Muhtar* (village elder) in their district. But here, the *Muhtar* job was a matter that no one wanted. Selim Sara held the job for more than thirty years without an opposing candidate in elections. After Seyfo, the Halaf family created their own quarter on the outskirts of the district because most within the extended Halaf family were engaged in livestock farming and breeding, and it was more suitable to herd the animals from the quarter on the outskirts of the city. In the vernacular, the quarter was called "Zvinge". A young, resourceful generation grew into a dynamic clan, and during the Mor Sharbel project in the 1960s, the entire clan participated with Yakub Halafi at the forefront in the formation of the congregation. Uncle Yakub was a calm and sensible person with great respect within the community.

In the late 1960s, some youths from our district ended up in a fight with the Saadatke family. The fight escalated, and Ilhan Saadatke attacked and injured the young boy Gevriye Halafi in an ambush. Binyamen led about thirty youths from our district, and for several hours, the youths went on a rampage in central Midyat, chasing the Saadatke family's boys. But in the ensuing riot, everyone who was considered to be a Saadatke kindly had to accept blows and kicks. Towards the evening, Ilhan thought that Gevriye's relatives had finished, and thus the fight was also over. But that was not the case. A group of youths from our district chased Ilhan in central Midyat, and on the road in the open field, Gevriye's brother Malke caught Ilhan, beat him, and caused him a severe injury. Ilhan's injury was not life-threatening, but he bled quite profusely. This was considered sufficient to scare everyone who witnessed the event. The seemingly small fight that began in the morning continued on and off until late in the evening with a victory for our district's youths. The fight was more a demonstration of strength than a brawl. After this event, our district's youths felt a great victory. The Saadatke family chose to capitulate and then become friends with the Halaf family.

ZETTE TJALMA

This is the Tjalma clan. The clan lives in the area east of the Mort Shmuni Church and its surroundings. The Tjalma family originates from Kaabiye like the Kashro clan. From the

beginning, the Tjalma tribe was not so large, but everyone who married into the clan and others who lived in the district were integrated within the Tjalma clan. Over time, everyone became welded together under the Tjalma banner thanks to Gebro. The phenomenon Gebro was cut out for the leadership task. He treated the individual from both his clan and other families with respect by addressing them with the words uncle or maternal uncle. Gebro defended the clan's interests before anything else, and in return, he received great respect. This in turn made the surroundings show him great respect. In Gebro's presence, there was no possibility for anyone else in the clan to grow into a leading figure.

BAHDOVAT

This is the Bahdi clan. The clan lives in the area east of the Jaima quarter and its surroundings. The Bahdi clan originates from the village of Beth Man-em. Originally, the Bahdi clan owned large parts of arable land. The family was engaged in agriculture and forestry. Advisors for Hanne Sefer and later also for Melek Barsavi. Adoka Bahdi and his son Asmar appeared as important persons in the district. Adoka was murdered a short time after Seyfo (a relative was suspected of the deed). In later years, Hapsuno Shibo spoke for the clan, but the clan had conflicts and could not unite around a leading figure. E-bandu was a man of honor in Midyat. He figured as a leading person in the district.

SAIDOVAT

This is the Saido clan, or rather the Saido district, which dominated the entire district both in terms of the number of families and leading persons. The clan originates from the village of Kaabiye. Before Seyfo, there were leading persons. After Seyfo, young Melek Barsavi Mo-Sefer appeared. But he passed away quite quickly; after Melek, the Sefer family lost its dominance. Illo Atto, de Sefer, and his son Skandar distinguished themselves, but as times had changed, the Kerimo family with "Yade Hana" and her son Hanna appeared in the limelight. But Yade Hana's only son Hanna died at a young age without a male heir. Israel Messo was a leading figure during his time, but he had not saved enough assets to leave behind to his heirs. In the late 1960s, Melek Bisse appeared and made a meteoric career in a short time. The political situation of the time and the city's demographic development came at the right time and served him power on a silver platter. Melek Bisse and Melek Kerimo dominated the political arena in the municipality, and in the 1970s, the gentlemen Melek and Melek were Midyat's most successful persons.

MALKE MIRE

This is the Mir-Emir clan and originates from the village of Karshaf (Kfarshomah in Aramaic). The family's move to Midyat likely occurred during the 1600s. In terms of members, this family was not so large. The family was hit hard by the Seyfo genocide and was decimated due to the number of deaths and the subsequent deportation. The clan lives north of the Saido quarter around the Mor Barsaumo Church and is steadfastly loyal to its saint. Stayfo Haydari was a leading figure within the clan and in later years also Aziz Kino.

GHANNO This is the Ghanno clan. The family originates from the city of Hasno di Kifo and built their quarter in northwestern Midyat. The clan consisted of about ten large, relatively wealthy families, most of whom were engaged in barter and handicrafts. Before Seyfo, the

Gavvo family was the clan's most successful branch and one of the city's well-known families. In modern times, Ibrahim Shabo appeared like a sun from the horizon. Ibrahim was the chieftain of all Midyat and the father of the country of Tur Abdin. The city of Midyat has never had such a beloved son as Ibrahim Shabo. He shone at the right moment and situation but passed away early in the middle of his career. His brother Ishak was also a strong figure in the political arena, but feuds within the clan and conflicts with his brother and his congregational affiliation discolored his career. Ishak and his wife raised a crystal-beautiful family that was too fine for Midyat's social climate. They left Midyat at a young age, and Ishak died far away from his loved ones in loneliness.

BARLATE

This is the Rhawi clan. The Rhawi clan is more homogeneous compared to the rest of the city's population. This is because they were among the last to migrate to Midyat. They grew quickly both in numbers and economic resources. Reportedly, the clan's ancestor Maksi Afrem moved from the city of Urhoy to Midyat in the mid-1700s. The Kashro clan gave the Rhawi clan refuge in their quarter, and the majority of the Rhawi family still lives mixed with the Kashro clan. There are many tales and stories about the establishment of the Urhoy refugees in the community. With the answer in hand, we know that the Rhawi clan was successful and in a short time made its mark on both the society they lived in and the entire region. In the early 1900s, Shemun Rhawi was the clan's chieftain and acted as such within the city's establishment. In later years, Toma Rhawi, his son Ibrahim, as well as Anwar Stayfan Rhawi and Djidjo Galle Rhawi are considered particularly successful and important persons within the clan.

ZABOK

Means "the street". This district consists of the area from the Mort Shmuni Church's street all the way up to the upper Commercial Street. There is no clan with this name in Midyat.

TCHIFCHAKA

Means nothing and is completely foreign to the region's language and culture. There is no clan with this name in Midyat.

PROTESTAN

Means Protestants. Everyone who converted to the denomination new to Midyat, with the Hirmiz family at the forefront, was registered in one and the same district.

ISLAM

Is all Muslims. All Muslims who lived in Midyat were registered in this district. The Muslim group consisted of Kurds, Turks, Yazidis, Mahalmies, and others. For example, the Islamaga family moved all the way from Albania and the Osman family came from the Caucasus.

The Millet System

Dividing the city's citizens according to their denomination or religion was the state power's way of governing society, the so-called "Millet system". The districts Tchifchaka and Zabok had nothing culturally to do with Midyat. There was no family or street that went by those

names. It seems that the responsible official who worked at the surveyor-like office in Midyat named the places. The first seven districts as above each bore a name according to the predetermined number of twelve districts, complete with the families who lived there. The district and the name were rammed through. The word "barlate" is Kurdish and means "in front of the cliff," and the name "Barlate" sounds very strange. The only visible thing is that the Rhawi clan lived below the rock cliff that stretches from the upper commercial street westward all the way down to the Gavvo family's place. But why the clan chose to call their district by a Kurdish name was incomprehensible. We asked the question to some of the clan's elders, but no one seemed to have any explanation for this historical question.

In Midyat, there were another dozen families who did not belong to any of the mentioned families. These consisted of newly moved-in families and those married to children of the already established families and were forced to register in one of the existing districts. Midyat's oldest known inhabitants that we know of are the Grigo clan. No one knows when this clan came to the city. In the 1600s, many families moved from the Omid area to Midyat. The migrants were all kinds of professionals and likely fled from the so-called "cizye," which was a special tax that only Christians were forced to pay to the state through the authorities in Omid's county. Midyat and the eastern part of Tur Abdin belonged to the sparsely populated area, and therefore the inhabitants likely paid less "cizye" and tax. Besides "cizye," which was a special tax for Christians, non-Muslims and the rest of the population also paid regular tax. The demarcation between parts of the country with different tax rates occurred demographically according to the population's composition and religious affiliation.

If one draws a straight line from Hasno d Kifo in the north down towards Nisibis in the south, one sees a map showing this. East of the line, the majority of the population is Christian, but west of it, there are not many Christians living. The famous line divided Midyat in two and went between the former Midyat which is Christian and the new Midyat, also called Estel, which is only Muslims. The mentioned professionals from Omid, Hasno d Kifo, and Urhoy enriched Midyat through their skill in trade. But those who became the reason for Midyat's business life and entrepreneurship flourishing the most were the last to move in from Nineveh. The Mousloye clan came to Midyat with strong capital and good business knowledge. The cultural mosaic and the new varied companies and business ideas enriched the city and made it the area's most populous and prosperous community. Midyat thus had the most influence over the entire county.

CLAN CHARACTERISTICS – p. 17

Clan affiliation was characterized by the fact that the clan lived as neighbors with each other. The houses were built in a connected form so that one could go to each other by using the roofs as a walkway. Order guards walked at night through the roofs around the entire quarters. The family had farmland and orchards. Zafri from the morning until evening, Jakpatrol looked around. Nau flew patrols to deceive the enemy. They had guards and support from relatives. The family lived in the village. The family had a common graveyard—mausoleum. The family had an annual memorial day for the deceased when each family baked bread and distributed it collectively to churchgoers. In clan feuds, the family

would stand up for each other without questioning whether their own family was right or not. They belonged to the same congregation, preferably with the clan's own priest. They united behind a leader and a party that favored the family's common interests and collectively voted for this party. Most importantly, they had a common stance on important societal issues.

The people of Midyat had their own way of speaking, which they used humorously, especially to joke with newly arrived families. The saying went: "To gain citizenship in Midyat requires at least a hundred years' residence in the city." In other words, calling oneself a Midyat resident with pride was not easy. One had to live in the city for at least a hundred years before having the right to be called a full-fledged Midyat resident or "Medyoyo."

According to the Millet system and the new democratization, minorities were to have local self-government in the form of their own schools, local police for their own protection where they were in the majority, and their own courts to a certain extent. Due to internal conflicts within the Syriac Orthodox Church, the Aramean people never benefited from this right. The Armenian Church represented the Syriac Orthodox Church in these matters.

A municipal self-government was established after the European model throughout the kingdom. When this right came to Midyat, and since it was civilian rule, the people welcomed it with open arms and managed it fully. Midyat's municipality, with all its politicians, officials, and workers, were all Arameans. Shemmas Circis, Galle Hirmiz was mayor until the spring of 1915. After the Seyfo genocide, Arameans were in the majority in Midyat. Malke Asmar Dabeth Karkinni became mayor. During his term, Estel did not want to be part of Midyat and chose its own mayor. With the reform, all of Midyat, including Estel, became one municipality, and the mayor of Midyat's municipality became Aziz Mehmedo. He ruled for some time, and after him came his eldest son Reshito. Then, in chronological order, the following succeeded: Reshito's younger brother Nurl, Zekiye, and lastly his son Ziver. The municipality was in the family's hands. Asmar also had his own mayor. During the republic, Nuri ruled in the family's hands from the 1920s continuing all the way to the 1980s, with the exception of a few years by Selim Ödbe Khoca (Onen) in the 1940s.

Under Ottoman rule, there were no public schools in Midyat. The wealthy families sent their children to Diyarbakir, 150 km away. In Diyarbakir (Omid), there was a secondary school for boys called "Rushdiya". Jakob Azer Grigo was educated in this school, and as a young student, he served in Midyat's state court as a secretary for nearly twenty years. Young Jakob was married and had children. He later became a priest to lead the clan. But after a short time, his wife died, and the young priest Jakob became a bishop in hopes of taking over Midyat's bishopric. But it did not turn out as he had thought and planned because he was opposed and frozen out by the Sefer family. The young bishop took refuge in the city of Hasno d Kifo and from there to the Mor Kuryakos Monastery north of the Tigris River.

In 1895, the Syriac Orthodox Church's highest leadership, the Holy Synod, gathered in the Zafaran Monastery to elect a new patriarch. After several days of grueling negotiations, Bishop Abdulla from the city of Sadad in present-day Syria won the vote. But the despotic

Abdulmesih from the village of Kalatmara proclaimed himself patriarch, and with the help of Ottoman police, he drove out the entire Synod with threats and violence and declared himself the winner. Bishop Jakob and the archdeacon Naum Faik from Omid defended the lawful patriarch. A tough and protracted battle began between the bishops over the patriarchal office, but the incumbent Abdulmesih was powerful and had the local state power behind him. Naum Faik was forced to leave the country. He fled to Beirut where he sought protection in the Catholic church "Dayr Sherfe," and Bishop Jakob fled to the village of Zergel in the Garzan area. Priest Afrem Sefer became the new patriarch's deputy in Midyat.

According to some stories, the Sefer family invited or lured Bishop Jakob to a dinner at the family residence to discuss the future of the diocese. The stories say that the Sefer family mixed the brain of a weasel into the bishop's food, and he was poisoned and lost his "sanity" after consuming the served food. We have heard this story countless times from our elders in Midyat. But reality is different, and the stories are based on conspiracy theories. The bishop actually suffered from senile dementia and began to behave inappropriately, which made his relatives find it most suitable to lock him up. He was locked in a room without windows on the small upper floor of the Mor Abrohom Monastery in Midyat, wall to wall with the large church hall on the south side. Through a hole drilled in the ceiling, food and drink were lowered down to him.

The illegitimate Patriarch Abdulmesih II had held the office for eight years. He paid large sums in bribes to the local state power to keep the office. He drank himself intoxicated, behaved completely inappropriately, and fought with the staff at the monastery to get money for his alcohol consumption. The year was 1903 when some bishops realized that the situation had become untenable, called a meeting on October 10, 1903, in the Zafaran Monastery, and after a poisoning attempt he was taken to a doctor in Omid. With the support of a medical certificate, he was declared unfit to represent the church. An extraordinary synod was summoned solely to make a decision about the patriarch post, and the synod declared Bishop Abdulla as patriarch instead of Abdulmesih, thereby fulfilling a decision made two years earlier but which had never gained legal force.

The deposed Abdulmesih went around the country in his bitterness to stir up opinion against the appointed patriarch. When he did not get a hearing for his ideas, he turned to the Catholic Church, where he promised that he himself and as many as he could bring with him would convert to Catholicism. He went to Midyat hoping to get the powerful priest Afrem Sefer with him and begin propagating around Tur Abdin. But Midyat had had enough of the division, and therefore no one wanted to listen to him. One early morning, he gathered all of the Mor Shmuni Church's treasures, including chalices, candlesticks, cash, and everything he could stuff into a sack, and went to the newly formed Protestant congregation in Midyat. He stated that everything in the sack was his own and that he would return at a later time to collect them. That same morning, he rode a horse and let the horse gallop frantically from Midyat towards the city of Nineveh to realize his transition to the Catholic Church. Just below Midyat, he stopped, turned around, and according to eyewitnesses, he hurled curses over Midyat and its population. People who had gathered there to say goodbye to him were

surprised by what they heard from a man who once called himself the people's spiritual leader.

In 1909, he visited the Mor Abrohom Monastery in Midyat on the monastery's anniversary and led the morning service. The monastery inhabitants wanted Abdulmesih to meet his enemy Jakob Azir Grigo, who was locked up in the monastery. It was a bitter and tragic encounter. Jakob Azir scolded Abdulmesih and died immediately because he scolded the old patriarch. This was considered a sign of God's wrath against Jakob Azir. Yawse Zerike Rhawi, who was then a boy in his early teens, witnessed this according to his own story. Jakob Azir was one of the most educated people of that time. He fought for justice within the church and was a good friend of Naum Faik. Like his friend, he fought to enlighten his people. Whether Jakob died of God's wrath or was killed in the patriarch's presence may go down in history unanswered. They went down in history as patriarchs, the people's spiritual leaders. These two men written about above were highly responsible in the church and for the people.

SEYFO CATASTROPHE – p. 21

Abdulmesih the Second, 1895–1905, and Abdalla from Sadad, 1905–1915. These power-hungry men fought and quarreled with each other over leadership, competing to bribe the state power with kilograms of gold during the most critical period between 1894 and 1916. The damage they inflicted on the people during this critical time cannot be described in words. First, Abdalla in 1895 went to Rome and converted to Catholicism just to spite the other. He received a cardinal title and a gold ring with a large sum of money from the Pope of that time. In 1903, he returned to the mother church to challenge the patriarchal power. Abdulmesih did the same. He went to India, where, for a large sum of money, he consecrated a bishop as cardinal, "katolikos," just to divide the people with his competitor in the mother church. From there, he returned to Jerusalem and began establishing a new patriarchate. Curses, threats, denunciations, and divisive activities became everyday occurrences. The curses came quickly—not from God, but from the Ittihat-Tarakki barbarism. The Seyfo genocide swept everything in its path. Patriarch Abdulmesih the Second died in autumn 1915 at the Dayro d-Kurkmo monastery, and Patriarch Abdalla from Sadad died in spring 1916 in Jerusalem.

One night during the winter of 1909, more than a decimeter of snow fell, turning red. People had never before seen such a natural phenomenon. The clergy interpreted it as a miracle and a warning from God, and they debated who would best guess what this warning would bring. Would a Sultan be murdered? Would the Patriarch meet the same fate? Or would the harvest fail and cause famine? During the summer of the same year, in his eagerness to regain power, the deposed Patriarch Abdulmesih II excommunicated Midyat and its inhabitants. People had never before heard such a thing from a patriarch. The same year, the Turkish Sultan was deposed in a bloody coup in Istanbul, creating unrest and conflicts within the local government between those who wanted to keep the Sultan and those who opposed him. One beautiful summer day in 1913, at midday, a solar eclipse occurred with its center over Midyat. The sun went dark during the farmer's busiest working hours. This too was a sign or

a warning of a catastrophe that was about to happen. In the summer of 1914, war broke out across Europe. All these events pointed toward a catastrophe that would eventually strike the people. The question was not if, but when the catastrophe would come. One day during the early summer of 1915 the police seized all men between 13–70 years belonging to the Protestant diocese, and they were likely executed by firing squad the same night. The guards who deported the men came to their families and sent greetings from the husband or young son saying that the person in question wanted some gold coins to buy his freedom from arrest. Treacherous guards wanted to cheat the widows in their despair in this satanic way.

Islam's wrath against the area's Christian population had reached its peak. During the first half of July 1915, the war drums of Jihad were heard from close by. The news that the powerful Hanne Sefer had been arrested shook Midyat's existence. All promises from the local police force that the Syriac Orthodox ethnic group was not subject to murder and deportation turned out to be empty talk. The cries of "JIHAD" were heard ever louder. Up to the struggle! The people of Midyat did not want to be arrested with their hands tied behind their backs and abducted like their Protestant brothers. Midyat's people fought heroically for a whole week against the entire state power and the multiplied bandit militia, but the resistance in Midyat was not organized, and the city was unfortunately abandoned by its Christian population. The establishment in Midyat believed in promises by the state power that the genocide and deportation only applied to Armenians, and therefore the resistance was not prepared. It is told in retrospect that the Hirmiz family did not stand up to buy weapons to defend Midyat. This is a constructed rumor in retrospect. Midyat was completely empty of its original inhabitants for more than two months, only to return partially as victors.

The genocide of 1915 became a milestone in the Aramean people's modern history. Those who were there and survived death started over from zero to eventually recover emotionally, economically, and socially. The stories of the killing and subsequent years of starvation, poverty, and consequently severe diseases dominated the entire topic of conversation in Midyat to our days. Widowers and widows remarried, families were completely exterminated, and people fled the country. Who would inherit whom? Orphaned children were reunited with their relatives. The hardest nut to crack was which relative had the best right to manage the inheritance for these children. It was told that some of these cases were solved by drawing lots at a simple "judgment". Midyat underwent a socioeconomic transformation like no other. With the answer in hand, one sees that large and wealthy families, who suffered human and economic losses, could not recover like others. Traumas caused by Seyfo had destroyed their psyche and negatively affected even the subsequent generations. The majority of the Midyat residents fled to the village of Aynwardo and, together with other survivors from the entire area, defended themselves with scarce resources for a total of 62 days.

The first Seyfo shot in Midyat was fired by Gello Tjalma from his rooftop against the military headquarters to prevent the arrest of Isa Zette Tjalma. Emanuel Poli writes in his comprehensive research that the time of the first shot in Midyat was, according to today's calendar, Monday, July 19, and on Monday the following week, July 26, the first shot fell in

the village of Aynwardo. That same autumn, the people returned to Midyat on Sheyk Fethulla's recommendation and immediately began, with scarce resources, to rebuild their destroyed city. The chief priest Isa Grigo took over the damaged diocese and worked hard to restore order throughout Tur Abdin or at least to save what could be saved. This man put his life directly at risk by searching for abducted and missing children and reunited many with their families. Isa Grigo searched for the diocese's properties through all the villages in order to hold those responsible for the disappearance of the properties accountable. This cost him his life.

War veterans or Seyfo survivors gathered in groups in their later years, around 1950–60. Most were war-injured and walked with canes. They had endured the worst and told the new generation about what they had experienced, partly to ease their sorrow and partly so that the youth would know the history. They mostly spoke about the barbarity but also about some kind-hearted Muslims. Among the names often heard were: Sheyk Fethulla, Hacoye Khortik (murdered in Hah when he defended the villagers), Aziz Mehmedo, Fasje-Ali Batte's mother, Saroxano, Sufiko from Dubanne, Sofi Brahime Gijale-Beth Zabdaj. There were also many others not known in Midyat: Haydar-Pasha in Mosul, Hilmi Beg and Shefik Beg in Mardin (governor), Hidir Chelebi (mayor of Mardin), Malla Ahmed and Shemdin Agha from Zakho, Hamoye Shero Ezidoyo from Sinjar, Osman Agha from Siirt, Vehbi Beg from Savro, and Chelebi Agha who rebuilt Aramean villages. Besides these, many other honorable persons made a humane effort at the right time. Yakub Zerike-Rhavi was a living history of Seyfo; he had been part of the entire story and participated on the front lines of the resistance in Midyat and Aynwardo. After two months of arrest in the small village of Aynwardo, the true face of misery began to show, and diseases claimed lives every day. Yakub was one of the initiators of the peace agreement with Sheyk Fethulla Hamidi. The legend Yakub lived until the 1970s.

In 1920, Atatürk called several hundred people, who were called the people's representatives, to Ankara. The newly created assembly was to overthrow the Sultan in Constantinople with the people's support and introduce a popular national rule of the European model. This went under the name BMM, *Büyük Millet Meclisi* (Grand National Assembly). Turkish nationalists, religious fundamentalists, and former officers in the Sultan's army sought their way to this assembly. Most of these actively participated in the extermination of the Christian minorities during the First World War. Topal Osman, who had several thousand human lives on his conscience, was one of those who helped form BMM, which later changed its name to TBMM, *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi* (Grand National Assembly of Turkey).

Democracy was introduced on power's terms, and to govern the newly formed state order, total obedience was required. In 1923, the Republic of Turkey was introduced. After just a few years, the state power gathered all clan leaders, tribal chiefs, religious leaders, and others who were considered hostile to power and executed them collectively to crush all resistance. Dozens of fine youths from Midyat became victims of this state terror. The elite who could influence the people against the new totalitarian state power were brutally eliminated. The Syriac Orthodox Patriarch Ilyas Shaker was summoned to Ankara to meet the newly formed republic's highest organ. No one knows what occurred or was said during this meeting. But

the Patriarch was classified as a security risk and expelled from the country never to return. He was first expelled to Baghdad and had his passport confiscated by the Turkish mission, later to be sent to India with British travel documents.

Tur Abdin's Kurdish clan leaders were seized one by one and executed. The occasional Christian leader who survived Seyfo could barely make threats against his neighbor, yet they met the same fate as the Kurdish Agha stratum. Isa Zette, the chief priest Isa Grigo, and Melek Barsaumo-Sefer also became victims. A young boy named Hadiko denounced seven Aramean youths during the same period for payment. A trivial conflict in the Saidovat district degenerated into a big quarrel about who would decide in the district. The conflict led to a bitter battle with the result that they denounced each other to the feared police from Midyat because they had done military service for the British occupation force in the city of Mosul. The denounced youths were: Hanna dbe Risko Hadodo, Shabo dbe Avarnayto Grigo, Isa dbe Zahrabaye, Aho dbe Ada-Melek dbe Gishir, Zeyto dbe Shabo Bahdo, and Isho dbe Sarko. Isa complied with the police's demands.

The police gathered the youths during the night, and without being interrogated, they were transported with great speed to the city of Harput-Elazig and executed publicly. The youths are buried in Elazig's Christian cemetery. The event went down in Midyat's bitter history (seven youths were hanged for a trivial matter). It may be like the story above, because not a single written text document is available for posterity (archives are still secret), but the event may have been of a serious political nature. Hanna dbe Risko Hadodo studied at a British college in Nineveh-Mosul and was a fully trained lawyer. During the time British-French occupation powers were in the process of drawing new land borders in the Middle East, everyone fought everyone for their own interests. The new Turkish republic was in full swing including Nineveh-Kirkuk within its borders. The Kurdish uprising in the area infuriated the Turks. According to some historians, Hanna Hadodo, along with some Aramean fighters like Gello Shabo, Hopo, Melek Barsavmo and others, was organizing a collaboration with the Kurdish uprising under French supremacy. In Turkey, anyone who had the slightest interaction with foreign powers was classified as a traitor, and the penalty was death. The state appointed a military court in every county; the judges were often Ittihat war veterans with bloody hands. The area's current court was located in the city of Elazig, and summary executions were in full swing.

The summary execution of the Midyat boys struck terror into the influential in Midyat. It was a matter of either fleeing the country or submitting to a so-called friendship pact, that is, a silent agreement with the local police force. The state power exercised terror against its citizens and forced them into submission, the so-called "sedikaldaule". Summary executions, torture, and hanging in public places created a reign of terror like no other. Denunciation, betrayal, and conspiracy theories could come from anyone at any time. Isa Zette Tjalma, Aziz Mehmedo, and Khalaf Beg were seized one night during this time of terror and sent with great speed towards Diyarbakir. On the way there, the gentlemen were executed in secret. In Midyat, conspiracy theories were going on about who had denounced specifically Aziz Agha, and suspicions went towards an elderly widow from the Garibo family named Sheno dbe

Shiake who worked as a janitor for the responsible military police. Because she was pointed out as a scapegoat, Aziz Agha's son Reshito took revenge quickly and bestially. He took the widow from her home by force and tied her by her feet behind a horse and dragged her to death on the road towards Estel.

DETAILS OF MELEK'S LIFE – p. 26

In the chapter above, I wrote about some gentlemen and events just from Midyat. But among all these was the young man Melek Barsavmo. Melek Barsavmo was born in the late 19th century. His father, Barsavmo, was a cousin of Hanne Sefer. At this time, his father Barsavmo represented Midyat in the province's highest council around the governor—Mutasarrıf Omed—and the family lived partly there. The boy Melek was re-educated in the best education of the time. In his spare time, he was at the St. Mary Church and received his education in Aramean from the teachers of the time, Naum Faik, Murad Saricaki-Tcikke, and other cultural personalities.

In 1920, Melek came to Midyat fully educated from Omed's Rushdiye High School with a law degree (assistant lawyer). He had reading and writing skills in all the languages of the region and to the highest degree. Melek spoke the language of the authorities better than high officials and knew the law and its paragraphs by heart. In a fairly short time, Melek made a meteoric career, became known among great personalities, and participated in all the community's issues, but above all in legal matters. The rumor of the young lawyer from Midyat reached the entire province.

A group from the headquarters of the Kurdish uprising from Omed visited him in his office in Midyat and left a personal greeting with an invitation from "Sheik Said Kurdi" himself that Melek could be a personal advisor to the Kurdish uprising's highest council. What was spoken in this secret meeting remained secret, but the visit became known to the local police force, and the manhunt began. Up until the day Melek was hanged on the gallows, the Turkish police were hot on his heels.

Melek became engaged in 1922 to the beautiful girl Kocare, daughter of Isa Gevriye, and shortly thereafter it was time for marriage. The entire military officer corps, all high officials, the area's clan leaders, and other celebrities were invited to the wedding party. The leader of the Haverka party (tribal confederation), Haco Agha, sat in the place of honor. The festivities lasted seven days and seven nights. On Sunday after the evening mass, the priest came and wed the young couple. Melek just managed to go to his spouse and lift her face veil before armed police knocked on the door and arrested him. Melek was taken from his beloved, handcuffs were put on him, and he was put in prison for four months without trial. With drama, sometimes on the shoulders of Hapsuno dbe Shibo from the prison's second floor, chasing threats of violence and harassment did not end.

In 1925, Melek openly joined Haco Agha, and the Kurdish Turabdin took off. Haco, his staff, and about four to five hundred fearless men, with Melek Barsavmo as an advisor, camped between the village of Aynwardo and the village of Taka. To everyone's surprise, the young

Melek had a woman as his private secretariat right at the tent camp in the village of Aynwardo. The dreams of Kurdish self-government were shattered. The wise Melek and Haco did not want to cause problems for the local population, so they went through the Raite landscape and on to the French control of Syria to direct the uprising. Melek could have gained power and wealth in exchange for collaboration with the French, but he did not want to. His character was rebellious, insurgent, and he wanted to live out his freedom. Melek had stayed in Aleppo a few months earlier after graduation, where he came into contact with a young, beautiful Frenchwoman. The love lasted a short time, and furthermore, she was married to a French officer. The year before, the longing for Melek had drawn her all the way from Aleppo to the rebel life in Aynwardo. Now when he established himself in Qamishli, he heard to his surprise that his mistress, the Frenchwoman Marika, had become a widow.

No one could stand in the way of Melek's deeds now. He sought her out in Aleppo now that she was free and more beautiful than ever. To cover the romance, Melek opened a law firm in central Qamishli and employed her partly as an interpreter and partly as a secretary. The jealousy of French officers over the beautiful Marika became Melek's downfall. In the autumn of 1926, he was seized by the French and detained to be handed over to the Turks, where he was wanted. On the morning Melek was to be handed over to the Turks, he asked the French to be allowed to come to Nisibis riding on his horse. "I left my home country voluntarily, and I want to return to it as a free man." Melek rode through central Qamishli escorted by six guards. At the border crossing, he turned around and shouted to the guards: "I know you are Arameans, why do you speak to me in French? You may stay here. I want to ride the rest completely free."

He rode on the remaining approximately five hundred meters in the high-grown terrain up to the Turkish guard post and surrendered. Melek sat in Nisibis prison the entire winter half-year, and he could take Marika in to him whenever it pleased him. All relatives and friends were allowed to visit him. He could have escaped, but he chose to stand trial, become free, and move to his hometown Midyat for good. In February 1927, he was to face the Turkish justice system. He wrote his defense in lengthy terms and sent it by registered mail to the Supreme Court in Ankara. The official answer was an acquittal, but the angel of death, the responsible officer in the city of Harput, hid the mail in his drawer and gave the order to execute the sentence.

Just before the gallows, Melek held a speech to the gathered people and said: "Honorable assembly. I do not deserve this gallows. I am educated in law and order. The Turkish Republic is a state of law, and its father of the nation is my guiding star. I like my country and its people, but still, you want to mess with me." Early on the morning of February 28, 1927, Melek himself pulled the string around his neck and kicked the stool from under his feet. A heart-wrenching cry echoed among the gathered people with applause of victory. Marika fainted and disappeared in her deep sorrow. After a while, the responsible officer came out and regretted the whole thing by saying: "I received the mail now in my hand from the postman, it was too late." "Possibly the man's death," mumbled the executioner. Melek was supposed to walk free but unfortunately, I am sorry, it is too late. Melek's dead body was

transported to the St. Mary Church in central Elazig, but the body was not allowed to be buried in the cemetery itself because the vicar had an old dispute with Melek a few years earlier in Midyat. Due to the priest's malicious stance—or perhaps because Melek was executed for treason and the priest wanted to show his loyalty to the authorities—Melek was buried outside the churchyard.

NEW START AFTER SEYFO – p. 28

Some important historical dates according to the city archive: Midyat became a provincial capital (*kaza-kestro*) in 1839. A municipality without the Estel part in 1890. With the founding of the republic, Midyat was annexed to the provincial capital Mardin in 1927. Midyat and the Estel part formed a joint municipality in 1930.

In 1923, the new republic *TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ* was publicly proclaimed under the leadership of the "father of the nation" Mustafa Kemal, who later received the title Atatürk, "Father of the Turks." The old, several hundred-year-old Ottoman sultanate was abolished, and power was to belong to the people without reservation. Women's suffrage was introduced, the Latin alphabet was adopted instead of the Arabic-Ottoman one, and a series of other reforms were carried out in a short time. The Caliphate was abolished by establishing an Islamic ministry, and a new world seemed to have emerged from the horizon. Christian citizens took this with great pleasure, but later it turned out that the reorganization was not in favor of the minorities.

On the contrary, the small religious rights that the Arameans had under the Ottoman Empire were completely swept away. The church, which represented the people, was deprived of its rights, which meant that priests and monks were exempt from paying taxes and performing mandatory military service. Now these became equal to all other citizens. The first general election was held at the end of the 1920s, but the ruling party was dominant, and parliament members were appointed from above rather than through a competitive multi-party system. Atatürk was re-elected with a 99.9 percent margin in all elections as long as he lived.

How did elections really go for the municipality and province? It should be noted that people who had literacy skills and could read and write in the local congregations were dead or had fled the country. Any other Christian who had the opportunity to run for these congregations was either a clergyman without political interest or very young. Only at the end of the 1930s did the new generation begin to emerge. Despite more than twenty percent of the total population of the province consisting of Christians, they were never represented in the provincial government. First and foremost, the people were without resources. The Christian population decreased in the 1970s. But not once did an Aramean get elected to the coveted provincial council. In Midyat's municipality, even though the Christian ethnic group made up more than half of the municipality's inhabitants, the mayor's post was never given to them. In connection with the republic's founding, the so-called Millet system was abolished, and this also affected Midyat's governance. The previously tribal-based division of 12 districts was reorganized into four geographical districts as follows:

- Northwestern part: Cumhuriyet
- Northeastern part: Akcakaya
- Southwestern part: Gülç
- Southeastern part: Işıklar

These new and completely fabricated district names have nothing to do with the city, neither culturally nor historically. They are just forced Turkish names that no one in Midyat feels a connection to. For each district, the inhabitants elected a *Muhtar* (village elder) every four years, who had no function whatsoever other than being the municipal administration's agent and sometimes its henchman. The *Muhtar* post was completely unpaid and often burdened with costs in the form of visits to the home and food for guests as well as trips to various places that were paid for out of their own pocket.

In 1924, news came that the state planned to establish a large military unit in Midyat. No one in Midyat had any idea where and how this large project would be started. The decision was taken far away and over the head of the poor farmer. The Mor Sharbel Monastery north of the city had been abandoned since 1915. The state confiscated the monastery with associated cemetery, vineyards, properties, and the entire hill with more than five square kilometers of area without asking anyone. A large regiment began to be built on the ruins of the monastery. Hundreds of youths from the area, mostly Christian professionals and craftsmen, did their general military service in this very large construction project.

The builder Malke Brahim built about ten large properties in a fairly short time thanks to the large unpaid labor force that the military had at hand. Several hectares of forest around Midyat were cut down by the military completely irresponsibly to fire up lime kilns (*ATUNO*). Dozens of hectares of forest land around Midyat became desert land. Multi-millennial human-wildlife-nature balanced coexistence was mowed down mercilessly.

A few years later, the "sixth gendarmerie unit" began to establish itself in Midyat. The regiment was popularly called "*Altıncı Alay*" (the sixth regiment). The military's presence affected the population of Midyat and the entire region for many years to come. Nearly a thousand conscripts with their officers and other functionaries required large resources. The Hirmiz Sora family farm was confiscated on a false pretext that the family had been exterminated or fled the country. The entire farm with associated properties was rewritten as state property and is still called "*Karargah*" (headquarters). Malke Shar Amosho's large house in the Kashrovat district met the same fate and the house was converted into a military hospital. The house is still called "*kastakhana*" (hospital). At least a dozen other of Midyat's finest farms were confiscated by the military power in one way or another. The Mor Abrohom Monastery, Mor Barsaumo Church, Saint Mary's Church in the southern district, and the Protestant church were forcibly occupied by the military and used as stables and for other military purposes, with inhumane mistreatment of the properties. One or another city resident complained about the mistreatment of the churches without any benefit. To whom could one submit complaints? The authorities were the same ones who were supposed to administer justice.

Despite the incredible interventions on the population's properties and on the holy places, the townspeople received the massive military presence with some hope, partly for the city's security and partly because the military presence created hundreds of jobs in the city. The officers' families lived in the finest houses in Midyat. Most of the renovations that changed the city's architecture occurred during this period. This generated some rental income to build more. The business life in Midyat took new momentum with various tradesmen, and certain individuals who had good contacts with the high-ranking officers earned large sums of money by delivering food supplies to the regiment. Long contracts were auctioned to contractors, and most ended up with a few families in Midyat.

Water in Midyat and throughout Tur Abdin was scarce at all times. People collected rainwater in the traditional self-dug wells for their own and their livestock's supply. How many wells were needed to supply the entire regiment was better known to the responsible officer than to the local population. He heard that there was a place commonly called "Ayno" (spring) located within walking distance from the regiment. He investigated what the word "Ayno" meant in Aramean, and when he learned that a water spring had once been active there and that was why the place was called so, he started calling about fifty young men to dig in the ground for water. Tons of earth were moved from the site over several days to find the legendary spring, but without result. Instead, he focused on digging a deep well in the bedrock down to where one reaches groundwater.

A suitable place south of the regiment on the outskirts of the community was chosen. Melek and Hobil Bagani chipped at the bedrock with picks for over a year. A well two meters in diameter was dug down to a total depth of ninety-six meters. It began to become dangerous to stay so deep underground without ventilation. Dead animals were thrown into the well to avoid oxygen depletion, and eventually, the project was stopped to the responsible officer's disappointment. During those days, the well was used despite the many inconveniences that could cause serious diseases.

Brothers Josef and Hanna Serti, who belonged to the Chaldean Church, originally came from the city of Siirt. They were literate. Josef had entered into a multi-year agreement with the regiment for flour delivery. The brothers started a large flour factory that could manufacture several types of flour in large quantities to sell to the regiment. The Serti brothers had assembled a large motor-driven mill from Germany, which was very unusual. The transport all the way from the city of Stuttgart to Midyat took a full six months until the factory got going and taught young Cano about all the technicalities. The flour mill, the "factory", was too big for little Midyat. People from the entire region flocked to the factory area to catch a glimpse of the large wheels that drove the long wide belts between the motor part and the mill. The sound of the engines was heard from afar, and inside the mill building, one could not hear each other. The deafening sound was unusual and foreign during this time.

A German engineer accompanied them, which, mixed with the dust one got over oneself, made the stay in the factory truly exciting. For many, this was completely inconceivable. The factory generated electricity that was enough for more than its own premises, and the Serti brothers supplied free electricity to some central places in Midyat. Important officers and

some rich Midyat residents could connect to the grid and light up their homes with electricity instead of oil-kerosene lamps.

The Serti brothers lived in a class of their own, far above the other social classes. However, the Serti family was not uncontroversial. There were many myths in the community about the family's lifestyle and wealth, and about how they kept their money in large sacks. The older brother Josef did not have time to count the coins he would give his employees in wages, and instead, he took a bundle of coins and handed it to them. If there were a few coins too many or too few, it did not matter much. He hired musicians and comedians to pass his free time in the evenings and weekends when he was off. The younger brother Hanna had a dog and was busy with the pooch during all his free time. He went early in the morning to the slaughterhouse and bought proper and chopped meat for the dog, partly so the animal would not get fat and partly so it would get full without chewing tough meat.

The Serti brothers were married but had no children. When the regiment moved in 1945, they sold a large part of the factory and subsequently sold their properties as well. Shortly thereafter, the brothers died without leaving any heirs. The multi-child family Abdo baptized Serti was distantly related to the brothers. In the 1950s, one of Abdo's adult boys died in a workplace accident in the factory. Abdo and the whole family took care of the widows of brothers Yusuf and Hanna until their last breaths, whereby they were allowed to stay in the factory house.

It is said that the regimental commander had met or forced an agreement with Yusuf Serti to charge the unit with "air invoices" (fake invoices) and return the money personally to the regimental commander. This type of business was not foreign to government offices, but this became expensive for the Serti brothers. In 1943 came the "*Varlık Vergisi*" (Capital Tax), and the brothers had to pay tax for every single kilo of flour that was in the fake invoices. The total sum of tax for the brothers was a whole seven thousand lira (corresponding to about seventy oxen).

In connection with the military's move from Midyat, the Serti manufacturers wanted to convert the factory to manufacture nails and similar technical ironware. Yusuf was hopeful about his idea. He reached an agreement with German engineers for the refurbishing of the factory and thought that this mass production would supply all of eastern Anatolia. But it did not turn out that way. The prevailing post-war economic crisis combined with the taxation of non-Muslims, the so-called "*Varlık Vergisi*", swept away the entire Serti family's dreams.

The Serti brothers appeared in Midyat like a bolt from the blue. Their business empire had arisen. Not even a gravestone remains for posterity to remind of the Serti brothers. The business empire lasted for a fairly short time and died out as quickly as it arose. For posterity, the brothers left only an empty shell of a factory house. (See image 2 p. 212)

Dreamlike tales are told about the brothers' glamorous lives, but who were the Serti brothers and where did this wealth come from? The young Serti brothers originally came from the Siirt area. A branch of the family established itself in the village of Bote and still goes by the

name "Serti". At the time of Seyfo, the brother Hanna was in Omid where he came into contact with a young woman from Midyat named Meyro. Meyro served a rich Aramean family in Omid, and when the family fled the war in panic, Meyro realized that the family hid a pot full of gold coins in the house's stable. Meyro told Hanna Serti about her gold stash. Young Hanna promised to help her save the entire find all the way to Midyat. Not only that, in the spirit of greed, Hanna proposed to Meyro and promised her gold and green forests if she showed where the gold find was. Meyro believed in Hanna's promise. It turned out that the stash was much more than believed. After a time of fierce quarreling and physical violence between Hanna and Meyro in the dark stable, he managed to dump her with a fraction of the gold find. The proposal to Meyro was a bluff. Hanna saved the rest of the gold at night all the way to Midyat and immediately started the factory construction.

THE SHEPHERD BARSAVMO – p. 32

Tur Abdin residents, in traditional wintertime, herded their large grazing flocks to the southern Izlo Mountain where there were large pastures and access to water below the mountain. One winter half-year in the early 1920s, Barsavmo lived with his flock. He was a young shepherd who, with his family in the village of Mshavile, daily herded his flock of sheep around the caves in the southern Izlo Mountain.

In the meantime, Kurdish Haverka, the party leader, with his hundreds of guerrilla militia, had overwintered in Raite where they lived in old abandoned monasteries and guerrilla caves all around. Haco lived in the village of Bethdibe and had good relations with Arameans in general. His closest circle, advisors, personal guards, and several supporters were Arameans. The Haverka resistance movement had suffered losses against the state power and gathered in the highlands of the Izlo Mountain. The militiamen's food supplies began to run out, and Haco sent some of his men to steal home some meat animals. The nearest flock of sheep was the target; it didn't matter if it belonged to Kurds or Arameans, preferably Arabs, but they were far away and there was no time this winter day.

Haco's robber group happened upon Barsavmo and his fat meat animals. "Yes, that is Barsavmo, a young lad from Midyat," said Savme, one of the thieves. "He is unpredictable and the aunt who provides the animals, Hana Kerimo, is stone rich, so we won't have a guilty conscience." The thieves quietly separated a cluster of sheep to the side and whipped them at full speed towards the forest. Barsavmo saw what was going on quite brazenly, and the thieves soon disappeared into the bush. He took out his rifle, shouted loudly, and fired a warning shot. The thieves were caught off guard and tried to threaten his life if he didn't give up.

"We are Haco's guerrilla men," shouted Savme, "give up or I'll shoot you." Barsavmo responded by shooting straight at them and threatened back with the same tone. Two of the thieves engaged him in battle, the others whipped on in speed and disappeared into the forest. The fighting went on for a long while until Barsavmo emptied his ammunition and he chased the thieves on their heels a bit with stones until they disappeared into the forest.

The thieves did not know that they had ended up in a lion's den; completely paralyzed, they came home too late. Haco with his guerrilla waited on the monastery walls and bit his nails curious about why the robber group had not arrived on time. Did the group encounter Turkish gendarmes and get murdered? Have they deserted? In the middle of this doubt, Savme appeared with his comrades from the forest but only a few prisoners (sheep). Haco became furious at Savme's small loot and why they were late. Savme told of his experience and the young Midyat resident with wide eyes. Haco met, but the whole thief group's unanimous horror experience became the whole rampart's topic of conversation. Haco was very impressed and wanted to meet Barsavmo himself.

Early the next morning, Haco sent two couriers with a spare horse to fetch Barsavmo for a meeting. Barsavmo got on the horse without hesitation, trusting that he would not be treated badly. He came hoping to get his animals back. Haco met Barsavmo like a baron and with serious respect, he acquainted himself with the young shepherd.

Said Barsavmo: "I felt sorry for the Haverka guerrilla movement's situation in the middle of the cold winter, I didn't think you had such an end. If you had asked me for some for Haco Agha's guerrilla men, you could have had more sent home than what you robbed. It wasn't worth fighting about, imagine if we had hurt each other and it happened," ended Barsavmo his complaint quite directly.

Haco stood there completely mute and was amazed by Barsavmo's magnanimous style, he invited Barsavmo generously and wanted to have him with him to get to know him better. The Turkish military power had crushed the Kurdish uprising in Diyarbakir and with two thousand armed forces chased away the rest of the uprising of which Haco with his guerrilla was the target.

Hana Kerimo in Midyat heard that Barsavmo is seized by Haco's guerrilla and was in captivity, she rides in all haste to Raite to resolve the conflict but Barsavmo was safe. Furthermore, Haco wanted to have him with him as a guerrilla leader. Haco with his brother-in-arms Hopo from Arbo was to move a large part of his guerrilla to the other side of the border and wanted a man who could lead the rest of the guerrilla movement on home ground, and Haco considered beforehand that Barsavmo could lead the movement. Barsavmo was young, completely unknown to the Turkish police, which is why Haco thought he could be his replacement in Raite.

Barsavmo did not want to, he was happy with his small salary and furthermore a new father. Haco, in Hana Kerimo's presence, tried to the last to convince Barsavmo, but it was a no. Hana in turn donated another few sheep and took Barsavmo with her to his wife. The Haverka militia with Haco sought protection in the occupied Gozarto. Haco was recognized as governor in Kabrehevore with surroundings and he was paid from France with a gold coin a day. The saga of the young man Barsavmo Ghanno from Midyat was told in Haco's large residence several times to hundreds of guests.

BACK FROM AMERICA – p. 34

At the outbreak of the First World War, hundreds of families from Tur Abdin lived in the city of Adana which was under French mandate. A group of youths from Midyat who lived in this city chose to emigrate to the USA. Only a few returned to Turabdin. At first, the youths made business agreements to weave silk for expensive clothing manufacturing. After a few years... Stayfo Haidari, Circis Masso, Circo Firmano, Shabo Sauno, Sait Shamunbahho, and Hanna Kerimo were some of the youths who returned. These young men had worked in the USA and learned some English and Spanish. The youths came back well-dressed and brought fresh money with them, so they were in a way too modern for the Midyat culture.

The youths lived partly in New York and partly in Havana and had seen with their own eyes radios, airplanes, and other technical objects that they spoke freely about. People in general thought that the youths had gone crazy and started talking crazily about their lives in America. The youths told of discos and bars that served beer. One could even go out and dance with foreign ladies. The youths were not believed, and people asked them to stop lying. What they told was purely fantasy or pagan. The priest in turn urged the youths not to talk about such things, even if they were telling the truth.

Hanna Kerimo was a young, neat, and successful businessman. He eventually settled down in Midyat and immediately began entering into business agreements with the regiment to supply food products. He traveled throughout the region and purchased large quantities of food from farmers and sold to the regiment.

During one of his business trips in the city of Bitlis, Hanna was invited to a wedding party. He accepted with respect for the prevailing social culture and participated in the festivity in the capacity of a foreign businessman. With his prominent character, Hanna stood out like a star among all the guests, and in the heat of the festivity, a young beautiful girl came forward and danced with him, hand in hand. This hit like a bomb among the wedding guests.

Within the Kurdish-Muslim tradition, it was completely unthinkable that a young and unmarried woman would dance with a foreign man like this in front of her entire family, especially if the guy was Christian. The expected strong reaction with a subsequent severe punishment for the girl, named Medo, who had dishonored the entire family and the entire wedding, did not happen. The male relatives present acted quickly and pulled the girl aside while seizing Hanna to silence the whole commotion. The clan leader acted in Hanna's favor because Hanna was completely innocent. He was invited to the party by the clan chief himself and he behaved like a gentleman throughout the evening. To suddenly be exposed by an unknown woman who took his hand to dance with him was not his fault. "No, Hanna is completely innocent and no one may accuse him of this," said the leader. The turns around how the woman's male relatives would silence it and keep the family's honor intact continued all night. Medo was locked up on the wedding night.

No, no one could accuse Hanna of the event. His only guilt was that he looked good, and the beautiful Medo had become overjoyed with him. Quite wrongly Medo explained to her parents that she either wants the young man from Midyat or the grave. The news spread like wildfire throughout the community, and Medo's family could not hide it any longer. It only

remained to end the gossip. The girl's family called Hanna to them and discussed with him in all seriousness taking over the issue that he would clear both his and the family's honor. No, this was unthinkable. How the discussions went during the critical hours no one knows. But rumors went throughout the region that Hanna accepted to submit to tradition and even received a new name: Ahmed-e Hana. But all this was fantasies woven by the girl and her family to clear the family's honor, of which Hanna was completely innocent. This love story is still told throughout the region, and musicians still sing about the young beautiful couple's love story.

Hanna bought a young white horse for expensive money and sent it all the way to Aynkaf as thanks for Lord Fethullah's effort. In 1927, he was accused of treason and was forcibly taken to Harput to face the military court (*Istiklal Mahkemesi*). Mother Hana went along and paid large sums and with her skill and contacts she succeeded at the last moment in buying him free from death. Hanna was very successful and became more and more popular with his generosity. This annoyed the leadership layer and local rule in Midyat. In 1930, Hanna was sentenced to municipal arrest indefinitely to the city of Kirsehir. There he would live and three times a week would show himself to the local police. The city's governor summoned him to inform himself about the sentenced stranger. With his personality, knowledge, and wealth, Hanna exceeded the chief's expectations. Hanna was not at all the common man walking on the street, but he was of a high-class European style. Hanna was allowed to move in society and with the chief's instructions, he was elected as a man one meets on the county council. He served a few years as a county councilor. During the same year, Hanna was entrusted to take the road construction project between Cankiri to Ankara.

The song goes under the name "Ahmed-e Hana Medoka Malle" and can be found among traditional Kurdish songs on the internet. Stories about the legend Hanna seem to be many. Upon returning from America, he heard about Sheik Fethulla and his efforts to save people.

Hanna's first marriage was with Mane, sister of Brahim Srimo. The couple had a daughter. After Mane's passing, Hanna remarried. The marriage lasted only a short time. On February 2, 1939, Hanna died at a young age. Many people came to the funeral, but the responsible order military stopped the funeral procession saying that it was not allowed to let a lot of people gather at one and the same time. The bishop asked for permission to let the people mourn the young Hanna. The horse-riding officer screamed at the bishop and said, "You traitors. Just a few days ago, the father of the nation Ataturk died. Even though we informed about general national mourning in public places, half as many were there! Is this not treason?" The bishop acted quickly so that the last half of the funeral procession would go to their homes to avoid further humiliation.

EVERYDAY CRIMES WITHOUT PUNISHMENT – p. 37

Workplace accidents, assaults resulting in bodily and property damage were not counted as crimes. The barely existing judicial authority was usually not involved. Honor-related crimes were a family affair or, to not bring shame on the family, the crime was denied and hidden as a sad event.

Below is a selection of events that were swept into Midyat's forgotten history:

Adoka Bahdi is shot in his bed Ado survived Seyfo and immediately began to reassemble himself from the ruins of war. In a short time, he could regain his place in society and through his wisdom, he made himself known in trade. One summer night in the 1920s, someone or some people had climbed a ladder to his bedroom window and shot him to death from a short distance. The nature and modus operandi of the crime pointed out a family that lived next door to him. The crime was never solved.

The groomsmen Shabo Tuma dbe Shakho had disappeared without a trace at the time of Seyfo. After several years, he appeared quite unexpectedly. Tuma was part of the Protestant group that was executed near Mardin in the late spring of 1915. The father Shabo and brother Elimis were killed. Tuma himself escaped arrest, emigrated all the way to India, and returned home after nearly 20 years. Family and relatives rejoiced over the missing boy's recovery. After a time, Tuma fell out of step with brothers Ibrahim and Ishak regarding the family inheritance. The joy over the brother's return soon became a black spot in the chief family's history. Tuma began to become aggressive in his attitude over time. One day he went to Ibrahim and began to forcibly demand his share of the inheritance. The brothers scuffled with each other. Ibrahim's eldest son Shabo came to his dad's rescue in the ensuing tumult, was squeezed against the door key, and suffered a severe injury. The family's eldest son Shabo, whose wedding the whole family was waiting for, died after two days from his injury. Tuma had no other choice than to flee. Shabo's betrothed Sade was engaged to the family's second son Nail who was then only 10–12 years old.

Isho Irro dies of his injuries In the 1950s, a trivial slap degenerated into a trial of strength between the Shakho family and the Abdalla Slivo family. Both families belonged to the same clan. The fight which went on for several hours ended with several injured. Isho dbe Irro was on the Shakho phalanx's side. During the fight, he suffered a severe head injury and after a few weeks he died in the aftermath of his injuries. No one was held accountable.

Isa Temo Ekingene's daughter falls victim Abdo dbe Darbaso-Nahrozo had fallen in love with the clan family's daughter (both Kurdish Muslims) but the girl did not want him. Abdo was a large and strong guy but poor without a profession, he could not pay the dowry fee and this was the reason why the girl's family was completely dismissive. Abdo planned to abduct her by force. One summer day in the fifties, the girl was in the garden not far from home. Abdo armed himself with a knife and surprised her on the way home opposite the community, but the girl was completely dismissive and began screaming for help. In his anger, Abdo dealt her several knife stabs and the girl died. Abdo disappeared to northern Iraq never to set foot in Midyat again.

A case of honor Selim Choca was a state official in Midyat. In the 1930s he became mayor of the municipality (appointed by the military rule). Probably the man was on good terms with the Midyat residents which is why people spoke positively about the Choca family. The daughter Lema was re-educated in young years, was beautiful and her glances caught Sleymano. Beautiful Lema fell instantly in love and the day after she went voluntarily to

Shexo. In the Kurdish culture, similar relations were legitimate, but the Choca family took this very badly because Shexo was married and much older than her. After only a few months, a story was made up and Shexo was accused of treason and Shexo was sent to Anatolia. Lema remained in loneliness at Shexo's. She shut herself in. She became pregnant and the gossip about the girl spread. Heavily pregnant, she was found dead in her bed, probably poisoned by her parents. Selim accepted his half share of the large estate "Karaga" and moved from Midyat. The crime was never solved.

Jakob Maksi Eljes

He who was called Jakube in everyday life, married and moved to Qamishli in the late 40s. He was one of six siblings. After a few years, the brother Aziz fled from the Turkish military service to a better life in Qamishli, Syria. Young Aziz worked in agriculture and lived temporarily with brother Jakube. One hot summer day in 1957, when Aziz was resting in the shade at home, accused Jakube murdered his little brother completely without cause. Jakube fled the family and his people all the way to northern Iraq where he later died in loneliness.

The Shepherd Miste

Miste-Mustafa was a Ezidi-Tjelkojo from the village of Kocane. Miste served as a shepherd for the Jakob Halaf family in the northeastern district. Miste lived in the host family's small apartment on the ground floor. Miste and his small family lived off the Jakob family's charity. Late summer 1967, Miste ended up in a fight with a shepherd comrade about a patch of pasture. — "It was my turn." — "No, it was I who came first." The guys quarreled with each other about who had priority to the pasture. The shepherd Elyas attacked Miste with a small piece of stone to scare him away. Unfortunately, from several meters away, the small piece of stone hit Miste in the head. But there was no wound and the fight was over with a little mutual scuffling without a fistfight. The youths needed each other more than to be at odds because they herded their flocks in the same area and guarded the animals every night collectively. Furthermore, Miste served with one of Elyas' relatives. Miste continued herding his flock without harming the host, but the bump he had inflicted from the small piece of stone became larger. At home after supper, Miste began to get a headache and soon he was ill. The host family's old mother Terzo thought that a simple procedure to puncture the bump would make Miste recover. But he got even worse. A quick transport to the nearest hospital was in vain. After midnight the car returned with Miste's dead body. Now it became really serious. — "Revenge! When?" Speculations took off, but thanks to the quick effort of some gentlemen and negotiations between the parties, Elias' family paid a reasonable sum to Miste's widow and the case was closed.

Screams from the balcony

Mbajdono was to build and widen his balcony over the street. Sleman, knowledgeable in the construction industry and safety, saw that it was not as it should be. One or another expert who passed on the street advised the workers to strengthen the scaffolding under the concrete slab, but the responsible builder Sulejman Tazza was satisfied with the existing safety. In the middle of the work, the scaffolding gave way and the catastrophe was a fact. The entire balcony with the concrete slab and several tons of new concrete stone and all construction

debris crashed down on Georg under the concrete block and he was crushed to death. Sulejman Tazza ended up on the edge of the concrete slab. His legs were crushed very badly. The entire district ran to the accident site. Georg's dead body was taken to the church and Sulejman to the hospital. The doctors could not save his life and after a month the father of five Sulejman Tazza died of his leg injury. A misjudgment by the builder Suleman resulted in the death of two young guys and left eight children fatherless. No one was held accountable.

The Samo dbe Tazza Case

Samo dbe Tazza was a well-trained 20-year-old in his prime. Samo and the neighbor family's daughter Stire (fictitious name) fell in love with each other, but it was just a regular youth love. To row this love to marriage, one had to fulfill a lot of requirements, most importantly the girl's parents' consent and mostly the father's. Samo was careful towards the future father-in-law Malke. "A terrifying figure," he called the future father-in-law. During this time, Malke was wanted by the police and hid with acquaintances in the countryside. Malke took it badly why Samo did not ask him first, and threats of not letting the daughter marry him came in running speed. Samo could not cope with the threats so he left the city for 18 months of military service in Anatolia. Thus, the love between the youths was a closed chapter.

After more than a year, Stire wrote a letter to Samo and told about the time after him and about the dad's homecoming. In the text, she comforted him that the dad's threats were nothing to place great weight on, "my dad has also accepted the whole thing. Come home so everything will work out," ends Stire her lines. Samo finished his service and in longing thought took the first transport home to Midyat. Upon arrival at the bus stop, a comrade told him to be careful: "Malke is nothing to play with. Send some friends to him in advance and calm him down first." In his despair, Samo began to seek the congregation's help and ask for advice. He is told to go home to Malke personally, submit and ask for forgiveness from Malke himself. If Malke is really angry he would assign him a punishment, but Samo should accept it as fatherly upbringing. Samo came trembling in his body all the way in his anger. A male relative met him. He shared a few words with Samo. They probably made an appointment with Samo for an evening to put an end to what had happened. Samo, in his nervousness, hoped the love story would end with joy. No, the conversation with the family was a burning Judas kiss. Samo was swallowed up by joy mixed with fear, later went completely alone to this meeting. This was the last time he was seen. It has been over thirty years and Samo is swallowed up from the earth.

Witch or Heroine

In the 1950s Midyat was in its golden age. Many poor, elderly, widows and homeless from near and far sought their way to the city to get a roof over their heads and a bit of warm food for everyday life. Some known names among these were: Shenoke, Macoke, Sedoke, Kitsike, Martoke, Kiyamate etc. Such derogatory nicknames were called poor older ladies. People frightened their children into silence that these women could become witches and come to them if the children were loud. The two last-mentioned ladies distinguished themselves among others.

Marta, who went under the name **Martoke**, was originally from Beth-Sherje. She had lost her home and family during Seyfo. War traumas persecuted her all her life. At a young age, she went around the country risking her life searching for abducted war children, primarily women, and offered voluntary help if they wanted to come back to their Christian relatives. Marta helped many, mostly women and children, to find their families. In older days she lived in the Mort-Shmuni church in a shed-like room to the left of the entrance and lived on alms. The provost, high priest Malke Gulce, forced her out to give the church's accommodation to the Kasino family who newly converted from Ezidi to Christianity. The provost, high priest Malke, baptized Kasino after his own name Malke. Martoke walked around on streets and expressed loudly her anger about the eviction from the church and said: "Malke turned himself into Kasino and Kasino became high priest." Martoke had become senile and now homeless. She lived here and there a few days at a time. Finally, she became so bedridden that the families who took care of her could not cope any longer. Finally, in the summer of 1962, Martoke was rejected by everyone and slept in the open field below the flour mill completely abandoned of human help. Marta lived her last days in misery. The peace dove Marta, as she was once called, was found dead one morning in her poverty.

Meryem, who went under the name **Kiyamate**, was originally from the village of Aynwardo. At an early age, she became a widow and had only her boy Gevrije. Meryem sought her way to Midyat for the boy's future. She raised her son. In adulthood, Gevrije married Meme and formed a family. Meryem was known for her odd behavior. She walked around whole days on the streets and collected all debris and wood chips, yes largely everything that could be... Poor human, she did what she could for the family's survival. Meryem wandered the streets alone in her shabby clothes and mumbled quietly to herself "*kiyamet ser kiyamet*" (doomsday upon doomsday) all the time over and over again. Probably the name Kiyamate comes from here.

Winter 1964, the Azizo Chalma family cleaned their water well in the yard and after Saturday's work break, Uncle Azizo covered the well with a piece of rag rug, with some stones around so that roaming children would watch out and not fall into the deep lagoon. Little did he suspect then that a strange senile older lady could step right on the rag rug and fall to her death. Just that which one could never imagine, happened. Shortly after dark, the confused Meryem happened to pass by on the street when she saw Azizo's front door standing open. She went in to the family. Probably she had smelled the smell of newly boiled meat and she was used to getting a piece of meat from the kind-hearted family, and to beg for some alms. Unbelievably enough, in the large yard, Meryem went straight towards the well, stepped on the rug and fell headlong all the way to the bottom on the several meters deep stone floor. Towards the night someone in the family had noticed that something did not look right and after closer inspection, they noticed that what could not happen had happened. To everyone's surprise, it was Kiyamate who lay completely lifeless in the well. At the same moment, some shouted from the street that an older woman had disappeared for several hours and that whoever found or saw her should inform relatives or the police. The Azizo family became panic-stricken and especially when they heard of the police's involvement. In silence, they closed the front door and at midnight they picked Meryem's dead body in a sack and laid

it carefully in a well outside the community. The morning after the Sunday service, all of Midyat lined up to look for the missing lady, alive or dead. After only an hour the dead body was found. The entire neighborhood had heard what was going on during the night, but no one wanted to cause problems for the Azizo Chalma family.

EVENTS THAT SHOOK MIDYAT – p. 42

In 1945 the regiment moved from Midyat. But of the Mor Sharbel Monastery, which the Turkish military had occupied twenty years earlier, a church remained. The other churches that the military occupied were left without being restored. The Protestant congregation retook the site and immediately began restoring what the military had destroyed. The church tower that characterized the entire appearance of the city of Midyat was gone in an inexplicable way. According to Turkish law, it was forbidden to build Christian sanctuaries. But despite the church tower having been torn down without permission, the congregation received no building permit to begin the reconstruction. Ishak Shabo belonged to this congregation and had good knowledge of the situation. He had contacts with those who sat higher up in the power hierarchy. The entire Aramean ethnic population of Midyat wanted the church tower to be rebuilt to erase the memories of the military occupation. It was important to restore the church's tower which lay at the very top of the city's highest point and watched over the entire community of Midyat. A flag that demonstrated Christian Aramean identity. The mayor Nuri Azizke and the responsible official for building permit matters in the municipality, Cemil Siloke, had no objection to the Protestants rebuilding their church tower. The congregation with Ishak Shabo at the forefront agreed with the municipality to build the church tower in silence as soon as possible, so that no one would have time to complain while the tower was being rebuilt. Should anyone complain or report the matter to the municipality, the question would be solved locally. It turned out as they had agreed. All Christian Midyat residents were strongly for the construction and one or another Muslim who did not want the high church tower did not want to raise their voice and make enemies with their Christian neighbors.

After twelve years of effort, in 1957, the builder Habib Brahim completed the construction of the fine church tower which still dominates Midyat's entire architecture ahead of other modern constructions. The church tower's architecture was Habib Brahim's work and it was unique and first in its style. During the time when the congregation was busy expanding, a missionary arrived who called himself "Shammelghala" from the Nineveh area and claimed to be the highest responsible to preach the Bible's message in Midyat and its surroundings. Trust in the man was low among Midyat residents and therefore Ishak Shabo reported him to the police with the pretext that the missionary did not have Turkish citizenship. The man was forcibly expelled from the country which created a certain form of irritation within the congregation. On one side stood Ishak Shabo and his supporters, and on the other side brothers Hanna and Takob Maksigalle who were dissatisfied with the expulsion of the foreign missionary. The fight between these two relatively rich families went on for several years in the form of reports and counter-reports as well as extensive bribes to the corrupt judiciary.

After several years of complaining and appealing all the way up to the country's highest court, Ishak Shabo succeeded in driving the Maksigalle brothers into bankruptcy.

The enforcement authority immediately put the decision into effect and auctioned the Maksigalle brothers' house to the highest bidder. The Maksigalle brothers had the right to buy back their house for a part of the market price. Ishak hired the city's most knowledgeable builder Malke Brahim and requested an impartial statement that would imply a reasonable valuation price on the object in question. Malke stood up completely without own profit. Malke valued the house at the then six thousand Turkish lira. Ishak wanted in secret that the family would regain their own house and not lose it. Habib appealed the price valuation and hired an engineer himself. The Turkish engineer valued the house at ten thousand Turkish lira, according to him to make a more fair price valuation. Ishak reported Malke Brahim to the police for bias in the case, which the Turkish authorities became very happy about, and the district court in Midyat sentenced the 90-year-old Malke to six months in prison because he valued the house to the Maksigalle family's advantage. All of Midyat banned Ishak's actions, both that against the carpenter brothers Maksigalle and against the old builder Malke Brahim.

Fikri becomes the victim of an accidental shot

A beautiful spring day in 1953, some youths from Midyat packed a proper food basket with some bottles of alcohol and went to the vineyards east of the city to amuse themselves. Fikri Isa Zette was to leave his friends the day after to go to the feared two-year-long military service. It was Fikri's friends who had arranged the picnic in his honor. The happy young gang did not suspect what awaited them later. They walked past the Serti factory, then Gubo Dhaklo and on towards the Arnas path where they turned to Zette Grigo's vineyard opposite the community on the open field. There they set up camp under the sun shining over the beautiful landscape. The scent of all kinds of wild spring flowers and the view over the hilly lawn was overwhelming. The atmosphere was very nice and happy. After a time of alcohol consumption, the youths skipped like small children in the open field.

One of the youths, William Shabo, took out his revolver and set up a stone thirty meters away to shoot at it. The gang of friends began taking turns shooting at the target and competed about who would hit best. The youths laughed happily and bragged about who was best at hitting the stone. William tried to change the magazine for the gang of friends to continue the competition, but suddenly the revolver jammed. A stressed William squatted and corrected the ammunition that was stuck in the magazine. "Let it be! Don't play with a loaded revolver. It is a devil's work," said one of the friends. "No, I know this. It is the first time it malfunctions," muttered William. "Let it be, William!!!" "No, I'll fix... damn..." "Turn to the other side, William!!!" "God how cowardly you are, I have had a revolver day and night."

William pressed in the ammunition and tried to shoot one more time. Fikri, who was squatting opposite William to help fix the damned revolver, fell backward completely lifeless. "No! Accursed William, what have you done?" Bang boom... No, damn!!!

The panic-stricken youths ran over each other completely confused and threw themselves over Fikri to see how injured he was. But they immediately understood that Fikri was severely injured and stopped breathing after a few seconds. Fikri had been hit right in the chest by a large-caliber bullet from a meter's distance and died immediately. One of the youths ran towards the community to notify relatives about what happened. What happened was extremely serious. A panic-stricken William ran for his life and hid in a safe place with a relative. The tragic news that Fikri Isa Zette had been shot to death by William Ishak Shabo spread like wildfire throughout the city and soon throughout the region. A great sorrow swept over the city and life in idyllic Midyat was suddenly embittered compared to the day before the event occurred. People in several hundreds went to the crime scene to see what had happened. Fikri's dead body, covered by a blanket, was carried by about ten youths towards the Tjalma district and laid on the family's balcony for loved ones to say goodbye.

Several hundreds of people crowded into a cramped apartment to show their compassion with the family. The women in the family cried uncontrollably and were accompanied eventually by more and more. Gabro Isa Zette's large farm became like a hornet's nest and at times a lynch mob atmosphere arose among the gathered crowd. Some Tjalma-loyal youths chanted in a corner and shouted in chorus: "Revenge... revenge... revenge!" Some with live weapons went towards the Shabo Shakho family to cause trouble. Gabro Isa reacted quickly. He came out of the house and from the edge of the balcony he held a controlled speech to the family with others who wanted to create unrest in the city for their own purpose. Mr. Gabro explained that what had happened was an accident and nothing else. "We are against all forms of provocations whether they come from my family, from friends of the family or friends of the deceased." Gabro Isa acted wisely and statesmanlike in an extremely serious situation.

The spotless family relation between Midyat's most influential families suffered great damage and the reconciliation work needed great effort and time. After forty days of mourning, the climate began to soften slowly and some prominent gentlemen with Bishop Afrem at the forefront began carefully the mediation work between the families. Financial compensation, so-called "Death money", was a common phenomenon within certain circles, especially among the Muslim population. But here it was not at all relevant. Mr. Gabro absolutely did not want to lower himself by accepting money for his son's death. The question was how to ensure that this deep wound would heal and how to recreate a functioning relationship between the families. The event occurred two weeks after the bishop's inauguration.

The mediation group that had been started on Bishop Afrem's initiative, came up with the idea that the only way to create a lasting friendship between the families was to marry off two of the families' youths to each other, so that the two wounded families become one through marriage ties. "This is an excellent idea," said the bishop when he heard the proposal from one of his advisors. Shortly after the anniversary of the event, Ishak Shabo's daughter Sevinc was engaged to Gabro Isa's son Ferid. Usually, engagement periods lasted about a year in Midyat. But this partly forced engagement lasted for a full seven years. After a seven-year-long dispute, the youths married happily.

Spoiled sibling's second victim

A late May day in 1964, Midyat's school principal Ismail took his friend and some alcohol and went to the forests near Mzizah. The purpose of the picnic was to amuse themselves in a drunken state in the open, because alcohol drinking among Muslims in Estel was not allowed. To give the appearance of bird hunting, the youths took a shotgun with them completely visible. Özcan Ishak-Shabo was a good friend of Ismail. In those days Özcan had bought a new car. He went on his maiden voyage to Azech on an errand and on the way home he accelerated happily to test his driving skill and the new car's limits. At the height of Mzizah, Özcan saw his friend Ismail from afar and braked hard to greet the happy company. But the joy lasted only a few minutes. Owning an American car in the city was more than luxury, thus one could be friends with anyone.

Özcan asked the friends if they wanted a ride, otherwise, he was going home to tinker with his new car. – "No, you don't go without greeting the last drop from the bottle." – "Here you go, take a sip." – "No thanks, I'm driving." While the happy guys regarded the car's luxury status and wished Özcan luck, they toasted with him once. Özcan took the glass and tasted for friendship's sake. When he caught sight of the shotgun in the trunk he asked jokingly: – "How many wolves have you shot? You dorks..." – "No, it doesn't even work. That is just a cover," answered Ismail laughing. Quite calmly Özcan took the shotgun, put a cartridge in the magazine and tried to close the rickety weapon. Bang! Boom! said the gun and a ball of smoke billowed out of the gun's muzzle. – "Oh Satan!" he screamed. The shot hit the friend Ismail Kayapinar-Mutta on the side in front of him. – "Damn! This cannot be true," screamed the friend.

Ismail was severely injured and the friends carried him panic-stricken on their shoulders towards the road, where he was put in Özcan's car and driven at breakneck speed to the hospital. But before the car was started Ismail had stopped breathing. He drove straight to the hospital, left Ismail there dying with his friend and went home. The news reached the city like a bomb. Özcan hid in an unknown place and the entire family was forced to request military protection for their safety. A revenge action lay imminent and all of Midyat's Christian population held their breath for the Estel Muslims' reaction. Midyat residents, both relatives of the Shabo family and the rest of the population, were afraid of what would happen. All Christians from Midyat could become a target in a possible revenge action. Arameans who had their job in Estel either stayed home from their jobs or moved out in the community very carefully.

As expected, it did not take long before verbal threats hailed down from different directions. After a few days of tense waiting, a group of sensible men representing both Christians and Muslims set a mediation commission in motion. The group started the work carefully and unconditionally. Ishak Shabo expected the mediators to propose a large sum of money to Ismail's family. Some extremist thugs quickly spread rumors that the Mufti family did not want money but wanted to solve the problem in the same way as Ishak Shabo and Gabro Isa solved a similar problem a few years earlier, that is to marry off a Christian woman from the Ishak Shabo family to a Muslim man from Mufti's family. This was of course unthinkable to

implement, fortunately, it turned out that the rumors were not true. The Mufti family from Estel had generally good friendship ties with the Arameans but above all with Ishak, and since it was all about an accident, the Mufti family showed their good side and let Ismail's widow stay. The mediators proposed a sum of fifty thousand, but Ishak was more generous than what the mediation group had proposed: a hundred thousand to the widow and another thirty thousand to the mediation hierarchy. The commission decided a reasonable financial compensation to Ismail belonging to Estel's well-known Mufti family. He was married and had two children.

THE MILITARY PRESENCE – p. 48

The military presence (*Altıncı Alay*) stayed in Midyat from the year 1925 to 1947. The city and nearby suburbs felt a certain security from the military's presence, but at the same time, this military presence left a suspicion that they were not loved and to a certain extent ruled and stole over their heads. The officers did as they wanted on their own terms.

Exercises with the "Depot Story" 1942

Firearms drills were done with real ammunition and on every occasion the responsible could hide some ammunition, Sami Kucuk could through his cronies convert this easily to cash. This activity went on in secret for quite a long time. In the autumn of 1942, this escalated into an internal discord among the officers and the highest responsible Sami got into hot water. A scapegoat to burden the entire crime on and sweep everything away with was the only way out. After an internal report in the late autumn of the same year, a group of officers from the central power was to inspect this very local arms depot in Midyat. Now it was urgent. The arms depot was housed in the southern district on the outskirts of the community, the same house that Sado Charre Sefer later lived in.

The days before the inspection it began to be very hectic for the responsible officer Sami Kucuk. He needed to act as fast as possible to fabricate a lie and find someone or some persons to blame the great crime on. Sami, with the help of Shekho Slejmano, took a neighbor boy and went straight at night to the depot where they arranged a fake break-in. Hanna dbe Alyaske, a young guy, was shot with two shots in the head from close range on the order of Sami Kucuk himself inside the weapons warehouse and the other, Isa Khalaf, was grossly beaten and fell unconscious so that he could neither walk nor talk. They dictated a story for Isa to tell at an interrogation.

The operation was successful so far and Sami Kucuk with his cronies wanted to make a big thing of it all to throw all dirt on the Aramean group collectively to be able to slip out. Sami Kucuk planned the operation in detail for it to give maximum effect. On one side he wanted to portray the real thief (that is himself) as a war hero and on the other side, as a reward for this, a possible upgrade because he saved the country from treason. In the meantime, all Christian men between 20 and 42 who in the vernacular among the Arameans were called "*IHTIYAT*" (reservists) were away. The Christian group was already unofficially but directly suspected. Many were at labor camps far away in inner Anatolia during "*ihitiyat*" (reservist service).

The murder plot happened at night. The military surrounded the entire city to search the houses to find the alleged stolen weapons. The bishop was dragged at gunpoint to the headquarters where he was accused of treason. He was dishonored and spat upon for what his people had caused. The bishop had no idea what had gone on during the night. He stood there ashamed like a statue in front of the executioner and received fabricated accusations without uttering a word. Early in the morning, he was thrown out of the headquarters and an officer was ordered to chase him on the street and pushed him from the two-meter high cliff at the... The bishop pushed himself in the darkness to the Hirmiz family's house. He received basic care for his injuries and rested nearby. It became a little brighter in the morning. Midyat residents woke up completely unaware of what had happened during the past night. The streets were overflowing with military police and a curfew prevailed, but only for Christian citizens. No one was allowed to leave their home without special permission from the police. People who defied the decision or those who did not understand the meaning of the decision (many elderly and women of Aramean descent who could not speak Turkish) went out on the streets. Police and military gathered everyone and took them to the rest that the police had arranged especially for this occasion. People spoke word to each other through rooftops and caves to hear their way through the curfew.

Most farmers, shepherds, women, and children who were detained all day were released. A priest with some relatives fetched the young boy Hanna's body and buried him in silence. "Is it Seyfo that is repeating itself? And where shall we flee this time?" the people asked themselves.

In 2008 the officer Sami Kucuk wrote in old age a book that deals with exactly "This event" in Midyat 1942. The book is called "*Runeliden 27 Mayisa kadar*". This is what Sami writes: "We had received tips that the coming night some thieves would break into the arms depot. I and two well-trained and well-armed soldiers hid inside the warehouse. We were completely silent. I warned the soldiers not to even cough slightly. Towards midnight the door opened slowly and a large male figure came in. He rushed into the ammunition section and disappeared in the compact darkness. Someone was heard scratching with lifting a heavy ammunition box and in the same vein Osman Cavus followed him. The man was so strong that Osman had trouble getting his revolver up. I rushed fast and dealt the thief two powerful blows with brass knuckles straight in the head. The man fell down. Osman Cavus took up his revolver and shot him in the head. We all deployed patrols took up the chase with the help of the assistants. Five hundred meters further away we caught a large boy. He was a 17-year-old boy. The arms depot which was guarded strictly by several posts around the clock was completely unguarded just this night." Sami Kucuk ends his story version: "I felt guilty as an accomplice. The alleged accomplice Isa Halef was seized forcibly dragged at night from his home and was later killed. Sami Kucuk was reassigned to the capital and upgraded to major thanks to his action."

The days after the incident, the men who were in the military labor camp returned home to Midyat to go back to the labor camps the following spring. But the plot frightened the people, and during the next six months, a large part of the Christian community fled to Syria to seek

protection with the French forces who were then stationed in the Gozarto province. The event took an important place in Midyat's modern history. Among the people, it is called "*Ishato du deppâ*" (The year of the depot), the year of sorrow. What actually happened was that Sami Kucuk and his accomplices had sold weapons and ammunition to certain Christians in the area. The buyers were, of course, not the 17-year-old Hanna nor Isa. According to rumors, it was Hapsuno and Tjello, two well-known weapons enthusiasts, who were involved in the affair. Whether this was true or just speculation remains unknown.

Young men from Midyat were in the city of Diyarbakir for military service, where they were first to enlist and then sent on to serve in various military units across the country. But due to the raging war in Europe and the distrust of the Christian "non-Muslims" (*gayri müslem*), who were directly accused of treason, they were kept in Diyarbakir's worn-out regiment under inhumane conditions. Christian youths were held there for further transport, but nothing happened. Rumors spread among the youths that they would be sent to labor camps to "work themselves to death." Some managed to escape from the camp, and many fell ill due to the misery prevailing there. During the waiting period, two youths from Midyat were executed, and their remains were buried in a place unknown to their parents. The grounds on which these youths were sentenced to death were never made public. Neither their parents nor comrades serving at the same place were allowed to inquire about their fate. The youths' fate was forgotten until seventy years after their execution when one of their comrades, who had slept in the same room, finally broke his silence and began to tell what he remembered of the event.

In 2010, the chief priest Yakob Doganay Sittike was over 90 years old. His memory was intact, and he recalled the story in detail. During a filmed interview, the priest said the following: "We were more than twenty youths from Midyat who were to be sent on to various units. But the process was postponed repeatedly, and the uncertainty about when and where we would be sent wore down our strength. We also did not know how long we would serve. While we waited, we worked with waste management and other unhealthy tasks. We were called to routine roll calls, and morning and evening inspections were held. This went on for several days. One day, after a morning assembly, we gathered in a large courtyard with high walls. On top of one of the walls, machine guns were mounted, aimed at us, with snipers behind them. There were at least ten long automatic weapons. Everyone was terrified by the frightening sight. We stood there staring at each other for a long time. Just beneath this frustration, an officer whom we had never seen before came forward, and without greeting the company, he began to threaten us, saying that everyone would be executed within the next few hours. The man exuded a psychologically tormenting and degrading attitude. He called us all sorts of insulting names such as rats, vermin, dogs, plague creatures, traitors, Greek bastards, and much more. We could hardly believe our ears as we heard all this humiliation. But the man continued for quite a while, brazenly cursing us directly in the face. Everyone thought the end was near, and some of us could not hold back tears. We asked each other if we would get a Christian burial and if our relatives would at least be informed about what happened to us. That morning's assembly in the high-walled courtyard is unforgettable. To hear such words directly in the face, our own death sentence, and from a responsible officer,

was a serious nightmare that still haunts us when we think about it. Among us young men, that day was called 'DOOMSDAY.' But thankfully, the threats were not carried out. Whether it was a scare tactic or the officer acted on his own initiative was never known, but life continued with the same uncertainty.

Our company commander was named Fevzi. He was not quite sane in the head. Some called him 'Deli Fevzi' (Crazy Fevzi) in the regiment. He tortured people whenever and however he wanted. Fevzi acted according to his own will. He arrested, imprisoned, and tortured people under his command. I do not remember the name of the man under him, but we learned that he was of Armenian descent. Fevzi trusted this man, and every time something happened, Fevzi questioned the man first and then acted. Two fine young men who spoke for the group and fought for us were put in jail in two different places. Shefik was detained in the middle of the Kerki jail. One day, Shefik was arrested on orders from Deli Fevzi. We immediately became worried, as everyone was detained without any charges. We were terrified that all of us would be taken to the building. We crowded to see him on the way out when he came up the stairs. It was crowded on the staircase so the jail guard went up first and stood in front of us. Shefik came up slowly with his hands in front in rough handcuffs at the height of the guard. He hit the whole large metal shackle straight in the guard's face so that he fell backward with a demolished face. The guard had previously tortured him in the basement, so this was revenge. Shefik was largely dragged with blows and kicks to the other house where he disappeared inside. This was the last we saw of him. We heard that Hanna was also detained but we did not see him. He must have been in another place. Shortly before midnight, some activities were heard out there but it was dark so we could not see from our barracks. A little later some shots were heard from the nearest grove and immediately afterwards a cluster of soldiers with weapons came into the officers' barracks. We could not fall asleep for fear of our lives after a night watchman revealed to us that it was Hanna and Shefik who were dragged to the forest and were executed by firing squad. Barbarism now showed its true face. The sorrow over what happened and the fear for our lives were total within us in the entire group. We thought all the time: whose turn is it now? Which of us will be called to Deli Fevzi? I do not want to think about that time. It was a night of mortal anxiety. We all friends from Midyat gathered and cried the sorrow out of us for a long while. What crime Hanna and Shefik were accused of we never got to know. There was no acceptable reason for their death. People who were convicted of treason met the same fate but our friends had nothing to do with that. Our greatest wish was to come home to our families. Later we heard that the reserve officer who moved around Deli Fevzi had found a letter written in Arabic and addressed to a certain person in the regiment, but neither Hanna nor Shefik could read or write in Arabic. Such was the case with these two youths. After two days their relatives came but instead of getting their boys' dead bodies, to at least be buried, they were arrested and threatened never to ask for the bodies."

Directly after the interview with the high priest Yakub Doganay, an interview was done with the priest Samun Dag, over ninety years old. He was also clear in the head and completely healthy. During military service, he worked as a second cook in the same regiment as Yakub Doganay. He tells his version of the frightening gathering, the so-called DOOMSDAY. "By

chance, I ended up in the kitchen and in a short time I learned the trade. I myself had it relatively good. I could at least eat my fill. I was called Simon and no one asked who and where I came from. There was general poverty, people lived in misery and it was so in all directions. Near the large railway station, a lot of people were transported in movement. It was a jumble of people moving, people and goods in large quantities around the clock. At this time you ask about I had been there for two years. A large group of reservists from Midyat had arrived at us in the company of Ibrahim Shabo himself. They were more than two hundred, all Christian youths waiting for further transport. In joy mixed with despair, we met as best we could. We comforted each other that we would all one day escape this misery and come home to our families. One day, quite unexpectedly, we were called to an information gathering. Everyone should be there. It was packed in the large courtyard and they had placed large firearms around us on the walls. We were frightened just by the sight. Why are these weapons placed against us? They are there to shoot us. Some looked for exits to flee but the whole yard was closed and locked. Some prayed their last wish and waited to be executed. In the middle of the great unrest came an officer I had never seen. He went up to the wall and started with all curses, derogatory epithets and what he could spew out quite brazenly. It was a real nightmare. To call the day DOOMSDAY was not wrong."

On May 27, 1960, the Turkish commander-in-chief Cemal Gürsel took power through a military coup. This bloody coup d'état was carried out by about forty officers. Due to internal conflicts, the coup men's name list was redirected to a number. This junta called itself "Milli Birlik Komitesi" (Committee of National Unity). Included in this committee was a person who already had bloody hands from Midyat. It was Sami Küçük who killed Hanna. Sami Küçük dressed in major uniform with an army of military to Midyat. 18 years later, in 1961, on the anniversary of the military coup, to celebrate the anniversary of the military coup and inform the local people about the newly created constitution. All of Midyat gathered in the open field by the main road and cheered for the murderer general Sami. A large column consisting of youths, most singing, walked along our commercial street. Sami called some prominent men in the presence of the military power around a tea party to thank for the "friendly reception". It had been nearly 20 years since the murder of Hanna and other violence that Sami Küçük had exercised against many other innocent people in Midyat. The nationalists walked through the crowd through central Midyat. Controlled by the state power and the city, but the "reception" was of course arranged by the little human who could not protest.

SHUKRO AND SCHMUNI – p. 54

Schmuni and her husband Shukro were originally from the village of Midin. Like all other men, he also did his military service somewhere far away from the home area. One morning at a lineup, the platoon commander asked if there were any Christians among the soldiers. For fear of harassment and bullying, he dared not admit openly and say that he was Christian. Shukro went the rest of his life with a guilty conscience for why he dared not admit his Christianity. After the military service, he had promised to fast 40 days, as Jesus did, hoping that Jesus would forgive him for the great betrayal that day in the army. After a few days of

fasting, the family priest forced him on his deathbed to break his fast and instead work and take care of his family.

Shukro worked clearing sludge on farms and with the small coin he earned he bought the most necessary and the rest of the day's work he put in the church collection to get rid of the great sin. Shukro had a competitor named Patte. Every time they happened to meet each other it ended with the gentlemen scuffling with each other until someone passing by went in between and separated them. The gentlemen's fighting about market shares became a folk song in the city: "*Shukro u Patte mkatalle u ahna kimfardjina*" (Shukro and Patte have fought and we watch).

The wife Schmuni was a capable entrepreneur. She ran a workshop on the farm manufacturing soap and refining sheepskin into leather and earned good money. Schmuni was liked by many in the community and she was called in everyday life "Schmunike". The night when Hanna dbe Alyaske was executed in the weapons depot and the military dragged the bishop in front of their door early in the morning, Shukro fought with the soldiers and with his body protected the bishop. Because of this, Shukro was grossly beaten and dragged to detention with the bishop. In the morning Schmunike went out on the street to see if Shukro was released. — "Stop!!" shouted a soldier a little further away. Schmunike could not speak Turkish but she understood the threat, which made her hurry into the yard. Two soldiers with live rifles slammed open the front door and wanted to arrest her according to the prevailing curfew. She tried to push out and close the door but one of them aimed the rifle at her and threatened to shoot if she did not come with them to the police station. In the moment of fear, Schmunike took a proper grip on the weapon and twisted it from the soldier until he stumbled on the threshold and fell headlong inside the yard. Schmunike carefully laid the soldier's weapon on the ground and chased them away, threatened with fists and kicks a good bit out and slammed the door. The soldiers did not believe their eyes, but until they understood what lioness they were dealing with they were finished mauled. Aunt Schmuni did what no one else dared even think of but what everyone wanted to do. The soldiers heralded reinforcements, after a short while the street was full of live-armed soldiers. Schmuni locked the outer door and disappeared with the children through the roof until the danger was over.

A LEADERSHIP LAYER PASSES AWAY – p. 55

The municipality of Midyat administratively included also the Estel part. After the military coup in 1960, a careful census was carried out in the entire municipality to tax the inhabitants according to the number of households and the so-called "guard tax". The taxation was determined by the local police authority and every outer door was counted as a unit. This meant that some who had two outer doors towards the street walled up one to not pay unnecessary tax. At night the guards patrolled on each side of the city and at every full hour guard A whistled and B answered him.

According to this count, 570 Christian and 30 Muslim families lived in the Midyat part who were taxable. Another 10 families, who lived temporarily in the city, were not taxable. In the

Estel part lived 450 Muslim families and another few who were not taxable. The number of inhabitants in the Midyat part was estimated at about 5000 Christians and 200 Muslims while in Estel the number of inhabitants was about 4000 and all were Muslims.

In violent trials of strength, Midyat was without doubt superior. Partly because Midyat was larger in number and partly because the inhabitants were more resourceful. In big politics, one voted across borders. However, the Midyat residents did not want to release the prestigious mayor post to the Estel people. Rather a Muslim from Midyat as mayor than a Muslim from Estel, they thought. The mayor post was the most powerful and highest post in the society with a four-year mandate period. Voter turnout was very high and the election went relatively calmly. One or another small local fight ended with a broken nose or a broken minor tooth, but the social culture tolerated a little violence and such events were not worth even reporting to the police. Despite the fact that the number of Christian inhabitants in the municipality was larger than the Muslim, it has not happened after Seyfo that a non-Muslim held this powerful post at any time.

Party affiliation was not based on any ideology and one did not vote as an individual and of free will. The large family or the entire clan voted for a candidate that one had agreed with in advance, voluntarily or by force. After the election in 1954, the Midyat residents united behind local politicians under the banner of Halk Partisi (People's Party). Ibrahim Shabo, Nuri Azz, and Mehmet Sherif entered a pact to not lose the mayor post to Estel. The agreement united the majority of the city dwellers and thus also the region. The rest of the inhabitants had to comply.

In the spring of 1956, Mayor Nuri Aziz was on his way to the provincial capital Mardin on a business trip. He and a municipal official climbed into a truck early in the morning. Nuri was in a bit of a hurry and therefore asked the driver to drive at higher speed. Just before the village of Kabala, at a sharp downhill on a high mountain, Nuri was pushed out of the truck's cab towards the cliffs and into the ravine thirty meters down. He was crushed to death. The official Hassan Sare testified that there was a civil officer on the trip and that this officer sat between him and Nuri in the cab. The mysterious man disappeared from the crime scene together with the driver before the police arrived at the scene. Whether Nuri fell out of the car by pure accident or if someone had pushed him was never investigated. There was no given enemy that the family could point out as suspected of the crime and Nuri's death was therefore not the subject of major discussions. Without demanding a new election, the majority of Midyat's political establishment agreed to appoint Nuri's wife Zekiye as mayor and the Azizke family was thus satisfied.

Just over a month after Nuri's passing, Ibrahim Shabo was in Mardin to be part of a business deal. Ibrahim was a reliable building contractor and therefore his services were prioritized over others to take over the state agency's construction projects. Ibrahim thus created many jobs for Midyat's working people. Ibrahim was generous to his collaborators which is why people wanted to work with him. The concept succeeded and became more profitable which led to Ibrahim being hired for even more projects and he made large profits.

Ibrahim had made an appointment with a state official at a cafeteria in central Mardin. The man came to the cafe before Ibrahim to prepare the meeting place and treat his guest. When Ibrahim arrived at the cafeteria, the man went kindly and politely and greeted Ibrahim and then went forward himself to the small bar. The man bought a cup of tea, paid cash and without attracting Ibrahim's and others' attention put the tea glass in front of Ibrahim while excusing himself to run a simple errand. The man left Ibrahim alone to come back shortly. Ibrahim stirred the tea with the sugar cubes that the man had already put in the tea glass and gulped half of the warm tea without suspecting anything evil. Suddenly Ibrahim sank slowly and fell headlong towards one side of the simple table. The cafeteria's owner and serving staff knew their generous guest from Midyat well and everyone ran in panic to his help. A small commotion arose and the staff corrected Ibrahim around towards the chair rack while shouting at their employees to run fast and fetch a car to drive the guest to the hospital.

Azze Murado, daughter of the well-known Shamune Hanne, was with her husband at the cafeteria when Dr. Ibrahim Shabo collapsed. Azze, feeling that Ibrahim seemed to be in a hurry, told her husband that they should wait outside until Ibrahim came out. Suddenly, she heard someone screaming behind her. She turned around and looked through the window, and to her surprise, she saw Ibrahim lying there completely lifeless on the floor. Azze hurried inside and sat beside Ibrahim to make sure it was him lying there. Yes, it was him. She shouted loudly, "Which damned bastard has shot my brother?" She carefully lifted Ibrahim's head and placed it on her lap, cautiously checking for injuries. One of the people in the cafeteria told Azze that Ibrahim had not been shot but must have suffered a heart attack. Several others said the same: that he had been sitting alone at the table and suddenly collapsed. After the doctor's initial assessment, it was clear that Ibrahim was already dead. Ibrahim was rushed to the hospital in Mardin, where the doctors did everything they could, but only a few minutes later, a passing doctor entered the cafeteria. The responsible doctor at the hospital announced that Ibrahim Shabo was dead.

The news spread throughout Mardin and soon to Midyat and all of Tur Abdin. The news of Ibrahim's death created a human earthquake in Midyat and the entire region. Thousands of people from near and far flocked to the district of Ghanno, and early Saturday morning, Ibrahim's coffin was carried on the shoulders of the mourning crowd from home to the Mor Abrohom Monastery. There, a religious ceremony was first held, followed by solemn speeches by several celebrities. Ibrahim was buried in a newly built mausoleum in the monastery's large yard. The nation's flagship, the devout leader who defended the people of Midyat in all situations, was gone. A leader who kept the torch of victory alight and showed the way for the wounded Aramean community had been extinguished. Midyat's most talked-about figure, Ibrahim, the era, went to his grave completely without warning. A deep national mourning fell over Tur Abdin's Arameans. Fear and sorrow could easily be read on the faces of the people, but life went on.

Isa Shammo was 14 years old and lived next door to the Shabo family. In an interview in 2012, he shared his memories: "My family had it quite meager like most in Midyat. We lived in the shadow of the powerful family Ibrahim Shabo, but after his passing, the future was

uncertain specifically in Midyat after this event. The following summer was the first stop in Qamishli, Syria, Lebanon and later as an emigrant all the way to Sweden. Since that day 45 years have passed today. I have never returned to Midyat. The longing exists still and it reflects in my fine dreams where life was not fun anymore. My mother is related to Ibrahim, there she took it hard. Mom sat there and cried whole nights, I felt unsafe and missed my childhood days."

Of the city's three most conspicuous leaders, only Mehmet was left alive. Mehmet had previously been in municipal arrest in the city of Tekirdag for a long time, therefore he was not sufficiently familiar with the city's large crowd of youth. Mehmet had great trust specifically in Ibrahim. "It feels empty after Ibrahim," he said once with tears in his eyes at Ibrahim's memorial service. Mehmet felt fifteen years older. He had returned to Midyat the year before Ibrahim's passing and was caught off guard, but he had to shoulder the great responsibility.

Just over a month after Ibrahim's passing and just before the fortieth day of mourning, an officer with high rank had arrived at the small military station in Estel. One day early in the morning the officer sent a message to Mehmet and wanted to meet him. Without questioning the purpose of the officer's invitation, he dressed properly and set off towards the cafe where the officer waited. After a warm greeting from the officer-dressed man, the pair sat at a table and the officer called the waiter and ordered two glasses of tea. While they waited for the waiter and the tea, the man took out a handsome tobacco case and praised the area's fine tobacco. Mehmet answered that it is not only the tobacco's appearance that is unique but also the taste of the tobacco grown in the area is absolutely the best in the entire country. While the pair exchanged praises over the area's fine tobacco, the man rolled a thick and well-packed cigarette and offered it to his guest. — "Here you go!" — "No thanks, it is I who shall treat you." — "No, let me treat first," says the man firmly, and with a smile the man lights Mehmet's cigarette. Mehmet takes a deep drag. — "Surely the taste is fantastic," says the man. — "A little strong, but good," answers Mehmet with a small coughing attack. — "Yes," answers the man. — "Oh, it burns all the way down in the lungs," says Mehmet. — "After another few drags you will get used to it, my friend," says the man and disappears in the crowd towards the main road.

Mehmet felt a little dizzy, took a few steps after the stranger with military clothes but retreated towards the edge of the table to not fall over. The mission was complete. Mehmet collapsed and fell headlong on the floor. "Help!!!" shouted some in the cafeteria. "It is Mehmet Sherif lying on the floor!" A small crowd of people gathered and were horrified by the sight in front of them. Mehmet breathed a little weakly but was completely unresponsive. Two policemen who were nearby took care of the situation but after only a while Mehmet was declared dead. All of Midyat followed the popular Mehmet to the grave. He was buried in his vineyard on the other side of the hill opposite Ibrahim Shabo's grave. Nuri, Ibrahim, and Mehmet were in their fifties, in the middle of their careers. The stories about their cause of death sound a little weak, but on the other hand, their passing in rapid succession and in

turn sounds strange. Furthermore, the gentlemen had just formed a strong opposition against a Democrat party that ruled the country with state anarchy.

TWO BESTIAL MURDERS SHOCK THE COMMUNITY – p. 59

Abrohom Binno Danho and his companion Yusuf were businessmen on the move. One autumn day in 1958, they loaded their pack animals with all sorts of goods and went on a business trip to the Meri area. After a long day of trade and hiking, the companions were to stay overnight with a family they were friends with in the village of Tinat. No hotel or guest home existed in the small community.

Abrohom was a decent man known in the area for his serious contacts with the local population and had high business morals. After supper, some neighbors gathered at the host family to pass the evening shift with the foreign Christian businessmen. After a while of friendly socializing, some youths pulled aside and started playing cards for money. Abrohom and the companion declined to join. After a while of playing, one of the youths lost his small capital and turned to Abrohom and asked to borrow ten lira to play more and possibly get back what he had lost. Abrohom advised him to stop playing because it was late anyway and soon time to go to bed. But the man asked him persistently to borrow.

Abrohom took out his wallet and bent towards the small kerosene lamp that lay on the floor to take out a ten lira paper note. It was thick in the wallet after the day's sales and he browsed among the notes towards the light of the kerosene lamp. The man gave a bursting sigh when he saw the bundles of notes. "Oh, you are worth gold uncle, because you give me a ten," said the man, while staring at the wallet. The man ended the game with another loss and got up quickly without uttering a word and went home. But his satanic thoughts did not let sleep come. He gathered his gambling buddies and explained his plan to rob the men from Midyat.

Abrohom admitted to his companion that it was unnecessary to expose the entire business cash in front of the youths, but that it would go so far no one could believe. The walkway from the village of Tinat to Midyat used to take four hours. The companions with the thick wallet needed to set off just after lunchtime to be home before dark. The companions loaded their animals and whipped on to reach home in time. After a while of walking on a desolate forest grove, they met the youths who behaved so hospitably the evening before. Abrohom did not let himself be humiliated. He screamed at the youths to leave because he knew them well from the evening before, but it did not help. The youths were driven by a hateful greed for money and now it was extra serious because the victims knew the perpetrators. Already at this stage, the youths could get long prison sentences for attempted aggravated robbery. Abrohom saw the seriousness of the situation and he tried to meet all the perpetrators' demands, but it did not work. Abrohom and Yusuf fought all they could for their lives, but two older and unarmed men against four armed youths was not an easy task. The youths also knew the terrain and the skirmish site more than Abrohom and Yusuf. After a hard struggle for life or death, the gentlemen lost and the youths murdered their guests in a bestial manner with axes and other implements.

THE "MITING" EVENT 1963 – p. 60

The word "miting" means demonstration and is a loanword from English "meeting". In a democratic society "miting" is no more than a Sunday picnic where people can socialize, discuss different thoughts and listen to a speaker. For Christian citizens in Midyat in 1963 "miting" meant more than a declaration of war. The truth is that the initiators of the demonstration wanted to create unrest in Midyat. By using Turkish nationalism's slogans they wanted to gather the blindly and extremely religious masses and sic them on the Christian ethnic group. — "Makarios? Who is he?" — "Cyprus? Where is that?" It is an area located between Turkey and Greece. Knowledge of Cyprus among ordinary citizens was no more than that. About the conflict between Turkey and Greece and what played out in world politics, one heard through the state-controlled media which were completely distorted and completely biased.

The only purpose of the demonstration during the fateful Sunday was to start a tumult in the city, which hopefully would end with murders that would scare away the Christian population to become objects of attack on life and property, as it happened during the Seyfo era. Here it should be pointed out that at this very time more than half of the municipality inhabitants consisted of an ethnically and religiously homogeneous group. The rest were Muslims of mixed ethnic groups. The Christian part of the population, however, owned more than ninety percent of the municipality's combined resources.

A Sunday in early February 1963 priest Makko Avrohum preached in the Mor Sharbel Church. He began with the customary religious sermon and the day's topic was about God's wrath against his faithful when they sin and about how the same God suddenly becomes merciful when his faithful return to him. The priest referred to the people of Israel's great sins and about how God forgave them during all times. The captivity of Babylon is a good example, he said. The elderly priest showed a very serious and tense appearance. He held his head a little bent and read from a sheet in front of him but peeked at the same time over the edge of his small round glasses at the congregation. There was something that did not fit with the priest and his trembling preaching voice. This was obviously serious. After the customary gratitude that a priest donates to the god power and the praying that the almighty shall not treat his people with wrath, he ended the sermon with the phrase: "God the merciful and almighty, we ask you to save us from our visible and invisible enemies."

He took a piece of document out of his pocket and everyone saw clearly how his hands shook. He raised his gaze and looked at the congregation in front of him. He read from the document: "His Highness the Bishop of Tur Abdin announces the following." Everyone sat tense and curious. What has happened again, they wondered. The priest continued: "A miting-demonstration will be held now in the morning by the Ama municipal house and we urge everyone to keep calm, keep heads cool and not provoke. Most important is not to go there and let oneself be provoked." The priest ended his speech. "Uncomfortable, frightening," whispered old Gello and opened his hands in praying position towards the altar and prayed in silence with a broken heart. "God, my God! You who have saved the sons of Israel in Egypt and from the Babylonian captivity, save us from the cruel enemy," he ended

his lament. "God! You who are almighty, see to it that these hungry wolves leave us in peace," prayed Uncle Kerim to agree with Gello. "Prayer alone is not enough, we must answer the enemy with the same means," said the young Sleyman and patted the uncles on the shoulder a bit encouragingly.

After the service, the people gathered outside the entrance door to the church where a heated discussion went on about what one may accept and not do. Most agreed that as long as the demonstrators keep outside the community, no one shall bother about them. But he who approaches life and property shall be fought with all means. "Up to the struggle, there is no return," was the slogan.

Who were those who wanted to cause trouble and fuel the hostility between Christians and Muslims? A small group of school teachers led by Cemil Ishler hatched the idea to set the otherwise calm community in motion. Cemil said on a later occasion that he had been dragged into this without thinking of the consequences and was deeply remorseful. Two of Cemil's co-organizers had been involved in the "September 6-7 events of 1955" in Istanbul. The hatred to cause riots in Midyat was well thought out by these nationalist Turkish youths, but they were surprised by the compact resistance of the Midyat people.

The demonstration was arranged in the name of the Turkish-Muslim nation "*Umma-i Islamiya*", the Islamic nation. The demonstration was to begin in front of the city administration building in Estel, from where a loosely composed group of a few hundred people, mostly idle youths, would march along the road towards Midyat. Symbolically, the cortege would parade in front of Atatürk's statue in the open field in western Midyat. The purpose was for people to protest against Greece and Makarios in Cyprus. Speeches were to be held and poems read for the nation's greatness and honor. Finally, the demonstrators would return to Estel the same way that went towards Midyat. Such was the content of the official permission from the police authority, the military, and Mayor Ziver. But the real and hidden thought behind it all was that the demonstration procession would march through Midyat's streets, past the four main churches in the city, and finally gather again in the mosque, unless the Christian population in Midyat dared to meet the demonstrators at the square.

Many had gathered behind the crowd with pack animals and riding horses, to attack the houses and rob as they had done during Seyfo. Towards lunchtime, a large crowd began to approach the outskirts of the community from the west. Several hundred, soon several thousand with their implements invaded the area. The mass was incited through the loudspeakers and with deafening roars and screams they ran over each other about who would be first and cut down their prey. Like a drunk wolf pack with teeth bared and ready for attack, they waited for a first signal.

There at the road, the police stopped the demonstration procession in a straight line about a hundred meters from the mosque. In the middle of the large intersection in the center, the organizers waited in front of the demonstration procession in military formation. The demonstration procession was led by a double-leashed black dog with a silver-colored cross hanging on its neck. The metal cross was securely tied around the dog's neck. The dog was

probably shaken by the large object hanging on its neck and by the crowd that screamed and roared so loudly. One could not be mistaken that it was a cross hanging below the dog's neck, but to be completely sure one needed to come a little closer and lean forward to see clearly. One or another who was curious about whether it was a cross or not hanging on the dog's neck was not prevented from coming closer. The poor dog behaved more sensibly than those who led him.

A few meters behind the dog waited an old black donkey with floppy ears, completely unaware that he would be in a book about Midyat's history long after the tragic event. The donkey had a slightly larger silver-colored cross hanging freely below its neck. The donkey had no leash but behaved still more disciplined and calm than its fellow demonstrators. (The organizers wanted to represent Bishop Makarios as a dog and donkey with a cross hanging around their necks). One can wonder how a human can hate a symbol like the cross but at the same time have it in their possession.

West of the road waited more than a thousand people in attack position. A hard core of some fanatics belonging to the organizer group with a collection of relatives and acquaintances as well as some who were forced to show their loyalty directed the large gathering. A little further away, hundreds of poor farmers from nearby villages had gathered in the hope of looting the relatively rich Midyat and waited for a signal to attack. Right back on the horizon, some horse-riding greedy old men harbored a greater hope of abducting a Christian woman when the men were murdered or chased away from the place. The attack would be perilous but it was worth the attempt, many of them thought. Among this crazy and hostile sea of people were also some kind-hearted people from Estel who wanted to work for peace, but they conducted a silent diplomacy.

On the other side of the street gathered around five hundred vengeful Aramean youths in defensive position. Stressed and tense, they checked every movement on the other side. People were completely on their guard and waited for developments. The police realized that they could not stop a possible riot if it were to derail. Suddenly a truck full of military personnel drove up and braked hard in the middle of the street. About ten soldiers with live weapons stood in attack mode in front of the demonstrators. The Midyat people took a deep breath and felt a certain relief from the military's presence. One or another from each side who knew each other stepped across the street to the other side to calm down those who were loud. The police chief whistled loudly in his whistle and urged the parties to keep to their respective sides and at a distance from each other. Otherwise, the police would detain anyone who did not obey orders. Those who were on the wrong side began to run back.

The bailiff Saadat Icz was a Muslim from Midyat. He disliked the commotion which is why he wanted to do a good deed for his Christian townspeople. When people ran back to their places, Saadat stopped among the demonstrators. "Oh, I belong to the other side," he said to the military guard and ran back. The guard wanted to stop him by dealing him some baton blows. "Don't hit, I am from Midyat," he screamed. Another blow and Saadat fell over. A tumult arose and the demonstrators ran to save the injured Saadat. A young demonstrator a little further away understood the whole thing as one from their ranks having been attacked

by Christian youths. He jumped down the street towards the place where the Midyat residents stood waiting and he shouted a lot of derogatory curses against Christian Midyat residents. Gabro Mbajdono was nearby and without hesitation, he followed up on the provocation and dealt him a proper kick in the stomach. "Ouch mom," he screamed and fell over completely lifeless. The fight started the second after but the police acted quickly chasing Gabro and wounding fighting youths with the help of batons.

Rifat Nahrozo was a newly become doctor and loved by everyone in Midyat. He understood the seriousness of the situation and acted quickly. Rifat came to the middle and shouted at the organizers that they should take their responsibility. With the help of police and some peace-loving Estel residents, he immediately appointed a group consisting of both from Midyat and Estel, Christians and Muslims, to keep the parties apart. Cemil Ishler held the first speech and thereafter an officer and a few more. One of those who aroused the greatest attention was the young university student Davoud Galle Rhawi. He read a poem about everyone's equal value and the people's loyalty to the fatherland. The demonstration was called off without major damage, to the disappointment of the organizers and certain demonstrators. They were forced to leave and return towards Estel with their tails between their legs.

ABROHOM OUSE BECOMES A MARTYR – p. 65

Late summer 1969, a group of thieves went to the Mor Gabriel Monastery to steal everything that came in their way. Suitable robbery objects that could be directly converted to cash were meat animals, and just this there was plenty of. The thieves discussed how and when they would strike, but they did not agree. Suitable time for similar robbery operations was usually nighttime during darkness. But precisely in the monastery, the animals were taken into safe places already before nightfall.

It was afternoon and the flock of sheep was in the hilly forest quite close to the monastery. The thieves were doubtful if they should strike when the flock grazed near the monastery, for there usually were many people there during summertime. But temptation took over, and one of the thieves named Mahme went to the monastery on the pretext of drinking water. He scouted if there were people who could disturb the robbery. Mahme had worked as a shepherd at the monastery a few years earlier and knew every building and the inhabitants of the monastery well. But just on that occasion, there were not many people at the monastery except some students and two unfit monks.

"Congratulations my friends, a more suitable time than this we cannot find! There are the poor monks and some small children. I don't think they dare go outside the front door even. There are three old men cutting stones in the yard. They look like they are from Midyat," Mahme told his hesitant robber cronies. — "Three old men you said?" — "Yes, three middle-aged stonemasons/stylists." — "Do you think they can chase us?" — "No, I don't think so. City dwellers don't know the terrain." — "Don't say that. Christian Midyat residents are not afraid of Muslims." — "Shoot them in the head if they don't back off. Shoot to kill."

— "Is it worth killing a human for a few sheep?" — "What can one do? Don't shoot unless you feel cornered."

They sneaked up to the shepherd. Their plan was to bind him and gag him so that he would not be heard if he screamed, and take away about twenty of the best sheep towards the village of Pirkan where there are caves to hide them during the night to then the next day take them further away to be sold. A few minutes later, the shepherd arrived at the small tent where the uncles from Midyat were, completely absorbed in cutting limestone. "Help, uncles, the thieves attacked the monastery's herd over there!" he shouted, pointing towards the place where the herd was, and then continued towards the monastery to inform the abbot. The shepherd discovered the thieves before they launched their attack. He understood the seriousness of the situation and ran as fast and as far as his legs could carry him, and then kept running.

Abrohom Ouse, who was one of the stonemasons, and his stonemason colleague threw down their picks and immediately started chasing the thieves. They were not sure exactly where to head, but they had to move strategically. Abrohom told his coworkers to split up to comb the terrain ahead. A forest of meter-high and dense oak trees obscured the view, making it difficult and dangerous to advance toward the target. Soon, the shepherd returned with two young apprentices and continued the chase after the thieves.

One of the thieves fired a warning shot and threatened to kill if the hunting party did not back off. "Never give up against bandits," thought Abrohom as he picked up some sharp stones and went on the attack. "Damn cowardly dogs, leave the monastery's herd alone and get to the forest," he shouted at the thieves and attacked them with stones held high. The thief Mahme understood the seriousness of the situation but was prepared to do anything to avoid being caught. He took aim with his rifle and shot Abrohom cold-bloodedly. The thieves abandoned their loot and quickly disappeared into the forest. "Damn Mahme! You shot the man for nothing, I warned you about the Midyat people and you didn't listen," said one of the thieves to Mahme. "Quiet," Mahme replied. "We did this in agreement." The bandit gang promised each other to keep the matter secret forever.

Abrohom was shot with a small-caliber bullet in the stomach, and his companions carefully carried him on their shoulders to the monastery. Since there were no cars available, he was transported on a cart to the main road below the village of Kartmin. Abrohom was fully conscious because the bullet had not damaged any sensitive organs. He bled a little, but it was considered dangerous. After a long wait, Abrohom was lifted onto an old truck, but after a mile, the truck had engine problems, so the "medical transport" was likely to be stopped. After an even longer wait, an even worse truck arrived at the site and hurriedly transported the patient to the town, from where a car could be rented for further transport to a hospital.

The last seven kilometers took about fifteen minutes, but the entire transport from the crime scene to Midyat's outskirts took more than four hours despite the short distance. That is two Swedish miles (20 km). The patient lost a lot of blood during transport alone and weakened considerably but was still responsive. A crowd of relatives and friends met Abrohom in panic

but everyone was aware that there was no time for anything but medical care. It was urgent. At Midyat's hospital, no surgical operations were performed and ambulance care did not exist. The nearest hospital that could operate on Abrohom was in Mardin, about ten miles (100 km) from Midyat. Since no ambulance services existed in the area, the safest conceivable way to transport the patient to Mardin's hospital was with a taxi car.

— "Taxi! Taxi! Can you drive all the way to Mardin without problems?" — "Yes, I can do that, fifty lira." — "Idiot! Fast, fast now! Hurry up," screamed one of Abrohom's friends and threw a fifty-lira note into the man's arms.

It was three hours of driving and it became cold for the patient towards the evening because the car lacked a heating system. A blanket and a pillow were fetched from the nearest family. "We lay the patient here in the back seat and you others get to sit here in front," said the taxi driver. People helped to send off the taxi car as fast as possible. The driver wanted a proper piece of plastic under the patient to protect the back seat. "Damn it, hurry up now," screamed a man from behind. Gathered people crowded and in the heat of panic comments hailed on each other from different directions, but the transport did not get started.

A thoughtful and resourceful minibus driver sat as a witness in his car and noticed the whole thing. He could not refrain from offering help when he saw a dying human lying there and that no one did anything. Abrohom was laid on a mattress in the back seat of the bus with some relatives around him and the driver drove straight towards Mardin. A bit on the way he turned into a gas station to fill up fuel but discovered quite unexpectedly that the gas pump broke. "Damn it!" screamed the driver. It took another while before the driver acquired a can of gasoline to get away. After three hours of uneventful transport, the car stopped in front of Mardin's state hospital. But to everyone's surprise, there was no doctor who could treat such injuries inside the hospital just this evening fateful for Abrohom and his relatives. The journey therefore continued to the nearest hospital in Diyarbakir.

Shortly after midnight, the car stopped in front of the hospital. After a while of bureaucratic work with enrollment and registration, the staff took care of the patient. He was still alive but noticeably weakened. "Wait until morning. If he has made it this far he will make it until the doctors come," said the staff at the hospital. "The patient shall have some drops now and has to wait until the doctors arrive on site." Abrohom did not make it. After more than ten hours of continuous bleeding, lousy transport, and bad medical care, he fell asleep quietly. A great sorrow for the family, the large clan, and all of Midyat.

Several tips came from different directions pointing to the same perpetrators. Abrohom's clan made a joint force gathering to take revenge on at least him who shot Abrohom. It was the same gang that in 1975 robbed house facades with their art and left their workmates. His and his comrades' works adorn Midyat's face for all future. The distinctive hoarse voice that enriched the deacon choir in Mor Sharbel Church had silenced for good.

The girl's name is Gül, is of Alevi origin and comes originally from the city of Marash. The name Marash is actually from Aramean "Mar-esh" and the population has once been Arameans but converted during an unknown time to Islam and Alevism. The guy's name is Sabri and is from Midyat. Both lived now in the city of Kurtalan, a few miles north of Midyat. The young couple began to love each other already when they were young, but the possibilities to marry and form a family were not simple, almost impossible. The love stopped at seeing each other from afar and at most waving to each other in secret. For Sabri's part, the romance ended when he had to travel away to another city to do military service and later also move to Germany as a guest worker. A love drama that will engage the entire ethnic group and stretch across continents.

The story begins when Gül waves back to her beloved Sabri in secret behind a curtain from the second floor on the other side of the street when he leaves the community of Kurtalan. After a few years, Gül gets Sabri's address from his acquaintances and the contacts by letter last for more than two years until Sabri during the summer of 1970 comes from Germany to Gül's parental home in the city of Marash. Gül and Sabri marry, civilly with the parents' consent, and after a few days they come to Midyat to register and to submit an application for a passport. The officials at the population registration see their identity documents and discover that Sabri is Christian and Gül Muslim. "This won't do," says an official and goes directly to the bureau chief and asks if he may complete the registration. — "No," says the chief, whose name is Macid, and calls the couple to his room. — "You cannot marry a Muslim woman so easily," says Macid. — "Sure we can do that," answers Gül firmly. — "No, little girl, it is not as simple as you think." — "Surely it is legal in this country that one may marry whomever one wants when one is an adult!" — "Yes, the law allows, but I have never done it before." — "Surely you have done it many times, but if she is Christian and the man is Muslim?" answers Sabri. — "Yes, such we have done, moreover several times, but how shall we do now?" says Macid and holds his forehead while staring at the pile of papers, and continues. — "But you, young man, to register this marriage you need an 'IHTIDA', a verification signed by three persons (see image p. 232)." — "What is that?" — "You need a special verification." — "What kind of verification, where can one get such a one?" — "I honestly don't know. I say that I have never been involved in a similar case. The IHTIDA verification is arranged at the municipality, I think."

Sabri spoke quietly in Uncle Macid's room in Aramean so that the others would not understand what he wanted to communicate. (Macid was Muslim but knew Aramean well.) "You get a coin if you handle this smoothly." Gül understood the message and nodded to Sabri that it is okay to solve the problem with bribes so that they don't get more headaches. One or another official of different gradings became curious and gathered around the brave couple and examined especially Gül with killing glances. Gül suspected mischief and for Macid to speed up the case she urged him in standard Turkish to do the job as a state official and not make up a lot of nonsense. Macid was stunned by the courage that the young lady showed and says calmly to Sabri to return with the wife the day after so that he gets more time to think about the matter. Sabri perceived the matter as Macid wanting some money, which awakened other satanic thoughts.

After work, Macid takes some like-minded people back to him and together goes straight to Estel's large mosque. It was common within the authority culture, but in reality, Macid had taken with him another few like-minded about what they had heard during the day at the office. The news hit like a bomb within Estel's Muslim council. "This must not happen and at any price must be stopped. A Muslim woman shall never be allowed to marry a non-Muslim." Conversion from Islam is called *MURTID*—traitor and the penalty is death according to Sharia.

They immediately set a plan in motion to abduct Gül. The next step shall be to forcibly marry her to a Muslim man according to Muslim decree. If she becomes difficult to satisfy they would offer her several men to choose from. But first and foremost she is abducted before she disappears to Europe.

Sabri and Gül decide to meet Macid alone at his office. They do not intend to take any special measures. The registration office where Macid works is located in the same building as the court, and the police house is located a stone's throw from there. The military station is also located nearby and it is full of people all around. Safer and more secure than that one cannot be. Furthermore, they have not done anything wrong. Why should they be afraid? For safety's sake, Sabri takes his sister's husband Afrem with him and all three go to the municipal building. The party is with Macid at the agreed time and Macid assures Sabri that everything will work out, but the couple needs an "ihtida" certificate. "Where can I get that? I have never seen such a certificate," says Sabri. "Such a certificate you can request to get from the municipality. Just go there and fetch one," answers Macid.

On the way out, in the middle of the large square, Sabri suspects mischief. There are unusually many people in the square and right in front of the house waits a group of youths around a car. Sabri's worry becomes greater and they stop and check the situation carefully. What is happening is not common. But he does not want to tell Gül anything so that she does not become worried. Why are there no police in the square today as there always usually are? he thinks. Police and military who usually dominate the presence in the populous square shone with their absence. The square is teeming with people and all eyes are directed towards Sabri and Gül. Suddenly there is a commotion and a group of youths jump on the young couple. Gül is forced by violence into the waiting car and taken away to an unknown place. Sabri and Afrem are beaten completely barbarically and left severely mangled at the police station.

Midyat's people, who lived in pride with an ethnic national honor and respect for all other ethnic and religious groups, now stood suddenly before a difficult and unexpected problem. Sabri and Gül must be saved. Whatever happens, whatever price it costs, the girl who chose to join the Aramean-Christian community must be saved and reunited with her husband. Gül became a test of strength between Midyat's Christian-Aramean population and Estel's and the entire Muslim Mahalmi area. The answer could serve as a hint in similar cases in the future. The case concerned not only the couple, their relatives or acquaintances, but all of Midyat's people, including the villages in all of Turabdin that had strong ties with Midyat. The entire

population's dignity was at stake. Would the social norms for the Arameans be dictated by others? What would happen next?

During the course of history, the Muslim neighboring peoples abducted several Christian women in the name of religion. Arameans in general and the relatives of the women in particular felt deeply offended every time such a crime occurred. But people comforted themselves with classic biblical terms. In reality, the Christian ethnic group could not respond with the same method. When a Christian woman was abducted she was often subjected to threats, violence, and violation, and the entire security system with police, military, and court took sides with the perpetrators. Sabri's and Gül's case was actually unique and the first of its kind. That a Muslim woman would marry a Christian man so demonstratively was unthinkable.

The news that Gül was abducted by violence and that she would be forcibly married against her will to a Muslim instead of Sabri, whom she herself had chosen, hit like a bomb in Midyat and echoed throughout the region all the way to Istanbul and further to all of Europe where Arameans lived. When people heard the details of the barbarism practiced right in front of the eyes of police and military, the disappointment was total. The entire Aramean ethnic group closed ranks and agreed to do everything in their power to get Gül back. Meetings and secret gatherings succeeded each other and finally, it became known that Gül was held captive at the future family's home, and absolutely did not want to marry by force and against her will. She was offered several, according to the abductors, handsome men but she refused everything. When the information reached Midyat in all secrecy, not many believed it was true.

Someone spread a rumor that whoever fetches Gül to Midyat will get a large reward. And apparently, it happened so. Just a few days after the given promise, Gül appeared in Midyat. How and who carried out this heroic deed remains secret for good. Immediately they were there. The world's biggest surprise had occurred. The news that Gül had come to Midyat and that she abandoned her faith triggered a religious earthquake like no other. According to Sharia laws, Gül herself had confessed her death sentence by stoning and those who helped her realize this had grossly blasphemed.

Revenge came immediately. Arameans who show themselves in Estel during private errands at authorities are openly harassed. Instead of protecting, the police authority discouraged them from staying in Estel. An older man who ran as fast as he could from the place until he got protection from some brave persons who offered rescue. While this manhunt went on daytime and Muslims terrorized Christians, heavily armed bandits roamed at night in Midyat's outer areas. An unknown armed group carried out organized raids around Midyat by shooting at balconies and rooftops where people stayed at night. Daily men who publicly by mistake got off the bus at a wrong bus stop were stoned and beaten down. Daytime collective manhunt went on in public in front of police and law enforcement, nighttime armed raids around Christian quarters.

The first strike was carried out from the mosque's plot where the defenders hid behind the wall that surrounded the yard to the mosque. The target was the high-rise buildings via Mor Barsavmo Church and those in the Saidovat district. Some glass panes were shattered but no human losses occurred. The night thereafter the defenders went at the Tjalma district with the same method, but this time the Tjalma clan and the entire district were prepared and shot back until the defenders were forced to retreat. The third night a smaller group came to the eastern part of Midyat. Their intention was to kill or scare Suleyman Yoken who lived on the outskirts of the community and who was one of those who protected Gül when she was hidden. But the fools apparently had no idea that they walked straight into a lion's den.

The clock was around midnight and the moon had gone up a good bit over the horizon. The horizontal rock cliffs below the community reflected back the moon's shine and made them show their true nature, which is why the thieves could not hide so easily in the darkness. The idyll's mild and quiet night was broken by sporadic dog barking. The defenders tried to sneak creeping on the rock cliffs up towards Suleyman's farm and began shelling the house. Suleyman answered with all power and the entire district woke up in panic in a rain of gunbattle. The Lahdo Kesenci family with their neighbors watched all night and discussed how they would act in case they were attacked. About ten youths guarded outside the farm and promised each other to destroy the attackers if they dared come near the houses.

People in all houses near Suleyman's residence were jerked up from sleep and the attackers moved up on the rock cliffs. But the distance was great and under the semi-dark night one could not shoot accurately. Suleyman with son Shabo and Isa Kesenci took their rifles, uncocked, and watched the stone wall through the forest quite close to the target. Isa also took the initiative and ensured that the leadership for this quickly inserted operation happened without making major mistakes. It really became a successful operation that stopped the bandits' ravaging. Weapons and bullets hit one of the bandits in the back. It was the bravest who put an end to their rampage. Aziz... From new directions was heard a small and weak howling like a jackal. "Ah, I am injured." One jackal was shot. The others carried him on their shoulders and disappeared quickly and vanished from there.

Early in the morning, the entire district was filled with police and others who were curious to see the scene of the battle. There one could clearly see fresh blood drops and tracks leading through the blocks directly towards the Nahrozo district to a certain address. But no one wanted to go further with it, despite the cruel violence against the entire city the judiciary showed no interest in investigating the event. The threats against the Christian ethnic group continued with undiminished strength and influential in Midyat considered that as long as Gül is in the city the threats are imminent. When, how and where the enemy would strike no one knew. This held the entire city in terror.

Amin Mahmado, a Muslim Midyat resident, took matters into his own hands and gathered about fifty Aramean youths and attacked every Estel resident who appeared at the bus square in Midyat. Vengeful youths attacked the Estel residents' vehicles with stones and clubs and beat about ten persons who were considered hostile. The police intervened and arrested Amin who was later sentenced to six months in prison.

Gül reported from her hiding place through her legal representative some persons for kidnapping for the event at the square in Estel. Also, the man who was decided to be her future Muslim husband reported some persons from Midyat because these had abducted "his wife". The man had acquired false documents showing that Gül had entered into marriage with him according to tradition. Report against report but none of them went further to prosecution. The legal apparatus was toothless in the context.

Murat Nahrozo called the entire municipality's top layer and the authority representatives to a meeting to solve the problem through a settlement. But soon they discovered that they were in a hopeless situation and that there was nothing to negotiate about. The conditions for a possible settlement were either or from both sides. While the discussions were going on in public, Archpriest/Vicar Aziz Gunel came in all silence one day to Midyat and arranged a nightly transport under military protection from Midyat to the city of Diyarbakir and then further to the city of Heidelberg in Germany where the couple was united in freedom.

Shortly after the Second World War until the end of the 1960s, there were extremely few women who were abducted by force by Muslim men. The number can be counted with one hand's fingers. To rape a woman was criminal and one could get long prison sentences. During this time the local legal apparatus functioned reasonably well thanks to the Aramean group's way. The largest part happened with violence or threat of violence against their relatives. Not a single one of the perpetrators was brought to justice. From the beginning of the 70s where the Gül case occurred and a few years forward a dozen Christian women were abducted around Turabdin in different places. Three different women left at different occasions their homes due to discord, coercion or threat; from outside this was not accepted and the public's judgment was hard. "Such must not happen" was the public's message to all. Thanks to Ibrahim Shabo with some other Midyat's proper gentlemen the women were fetched within the family and married to Muslim men. Even if they went without back to their families. With respect for the women's relatives and the persons' integrity, no names may be published here.

THE SON OF THE PEOPLE COMES TO THE RESCUE – p. 74

Archpriest Aziz was from the village of Kfarze, but he served in the city of Diyarbakir during the 60s and 70s while there were Arameans left in the city. Aziz was a capable and successful gentleman during his days. He also had a certain interaction with the police force, which is why he moved diligently in the corridors of power in Diyarbakir, which was the largest city in the region. He had a certain background in Midyat and therefore came at the Gül case when Midyat's Christian people were in a squeeze to the city's rescue.

Accompanying two high officers, Aziz Gunel arrived in Midyat and in all secrecy Gül was sent to Europe. The day after, to show their gratitude for the help, some of Midyat's celebrities gathered in northern commercial street 1, Yakob Ercan's shop, and from there the gentlemen marched with the officer guest in the same line through the central city. The Midyat residents and the officers wanted to demonstrate a "victory gesture" before the guests would say goodbye to the Midyat residents.

In the middle of the commercial street, the basket maker Shabo saw the Excellencies walk slowly down towards his shop. He was seized by panic and experienced suddenly a feeling of hysteria. Shabo, who had the nickname Cikal, and the vicar Aziz were childhood friends. Now when he saw the friend, moreover in priest clothes and with a large hat, flanked by two high officers with uniforms that were adorned with flashing multicolored badges under tough-strict caps with large golden yellow badges on the forehead pulled down all the way to the nose root, beside all other Midyat's highnesses, Shabo could not hide his great joy. "Lord my creator, what a glorious sight!", he thought. Aziz in the middle, a good bit taller and statelier than the others in the line with a mid-blue suit and a huge hat on the head like a royal crown. Aziz with his figure stole the whole show. Such a sight, such glory one only saw on official parades. Cikal stood there completely stiff with his gaze and regarded the gentry, completely confused in his thoughts. He could not hold his boiling attack of joy and screamed out everything his lungs could manage. "Hallelujah, hallelujah", followed by frantic applause.

There were many people in motion which is why Shabo wanted to do even more for his friend. He ran into the bakery next door and bought a whole loaf of fresh bread for a whole Turkish lira and ran after the gentlemen. He squeezed obliquely behind Aziz and tried to stuff the large loaf in his jacket pocket. Aziz understood the matter immediately and without drawing the others' attention turned towards Shabo, thanked him and told him to let be this with the bread and instead walk in the line. But Shabo could not refrain from leaving his present. "Thanks for the kindness Shabo, but not now," said Aziz. "Sure, my lord, you are really worth more," answered Shabo with sputtering happy lips. "Thanks anyway, Shabo, but I don't want bread right now," answered Aziz.

The bread loaf was large and Shabo tried to force it into the jacket's pocket but it didn't go so well. Flour residues at the bottom of the loaf made large and visible spots on the blue jacket so that the act changed to a theater performance. The officer next to him saw the folly and with his left hand shooed away Shabo while he tried to shake away the flour from the jacket with the right hand. The officer didn't really understand what was going on and he took a run-up to deal Shabo a slap. Aziz went quickly in between and asked the officer to let be. But Shabo didn't want to break his gesture of reverence. Finally, Aziz was forced to leave the line and talk sense to Shabo that it was not the right time for the bread and thanked for the kindness anyway. To donate a piece of bread to traveling loved ones when saying goodbye to each other was a human fine gesture in the old culture. But poor Shabo didn't get his will through in central Midyat.

THE OCCUPATION OF CYPRUS 1974 – p. 76

July 1974 Turkey invaded the northern part of Cyprus. The totally state-controlled media spewed their years-long hatred over enemy land and its allies. The media's one-sided war reporting had a threat: to incite the masses against an invented common enemy. The whole single slogan: Turk-Islam, one country one nation... The propaganda had a single effect: democracy activists who were against the occupation could not make themselves heard against this compact war mobilization.

The Christian citizens, and above all the Arameans, far away in Bethnahrin had nothing to do with the matter, but still given hate objects. Christians in general felt singled out and the attitude of the police force was not foreign to the Turkish-Muslim mentality and therefore people were careful with their comments precisely about the invented one-sided war. As if it wasn't enough with TV, radio, and daily newspapers, which were soaked in all sorts of incitement against non-Muslim ethnic groups, large posters with gross racist messages covered every poster pillar in the city, publicly owned and private buses, trucks, taxis and more. The posters that provoked anger and hatred were more intensive where Christians moved. A poster that one saw several times a day hung on city buses, trucks and on public buildings and read like this: "My son, you are never forgiven if you do not attack the enemy." Such a racist message in Midyat had a single purpose; to spread hatred against the Christian citizens.

During a Friday prayer in central Midyat, a mullah who came from the Diyarbakir area preached loudly through the loudspeakers that "the enemy in Cyprus murders ruthlessly our youths but we here in this city associate with and greet the same enemy who kills and mutilates the nation's young soldiers." The mullah urged the people not to greet non-Muslims and not to shop for goods from Christians' shops. The mullah in his sermon escalated everything he could with hateful calls against the Christians in the city completely insolently until one of the listeners inside the mosque snatched the microphone out of the mullah's hands by force. Some sensible Muslims who witnessed the event, among others Abdulkерim Islamaga, Celal Shemikan and Sadettin Icz, reported the mullah to the police for incitement and meant that the hateful mullah was not welcome in Midyat's mosque anymore. This was considered a small plaster on the very frightening climate that the state power had consciously created.

The days after the event in the mosque, a high-ranking Turkish officer was shot to death. According to Turkish media, he had been shot by the Greeks. And he had "fallen martyr" in the Turkish-occupied area of northern Cyprus. The media used the event maximally in its war propaganda. TV news was dominated by the state pompous funeral with red flags in the presence of tens of thousands of people. "Revenge, revenge" was shouted from the rooftops in the vast display square. Immediately after the news, the evening echoed of the city Siirt's liberation. The truth was that the city Siirt had never been occupied by foreign powers in living memory and this so-called liberation day was completely fabricated. The only "liberation" that the Turkish media wanted to remind about was that at the First World War, when the Christians in Siirt, who to more than half consisted of Arameans, were expelled by the Turkish empire when the Ottoman Empire went under to access their properties as was done with other cities within the Ottoman Empire. The entire evening's TV program was dominated by fascist battle songs and other nationalist offensive slurs.

In the morning the day after, two Christian teenagers fought with each other in the village of Mzizah in front of the Tchelebi family's large farm. Both boys' families were friends of the clan leader Husseyn Tchelebi. He therefore went out of his residence and without asking why the boys were at odds with each other he screamed at them to stop. Husseyn thought that

everything was clear and turned back to go inside. Suddenly his wife calls to him from the balcony and urges him to go out again and separate the angry boys from each other, because one of them had a revolver on him. Husseyn goes out quickly again and screams sharply at the kid with the pistol to hand over the weapon. While the boy approaches Husseyn reluctantly, Husseyn snatches the weapon with one hand and with the other deals the boy a common slap. Bang, says the pistol, and Husseyn falls backward to the ground. It goes very fast. He loses a lot of blood and lies completely lifeless there on the ground.

It is serious, very serious! At the same time as the country is in a national holy war against one of the Turks' most hated objects, Makarios, and jihad's trumpets call loudly for a national mobilization, an important power-allied clan leader is shot by a completely simple Christian young man. This can end however badly. The matter is not made better by the fact that the political power in the local clan politics is not in balance during the current time. The Christian group in the area which was the Tchelebi family's subordinate in all years had with the help of the competitor Selim Batte quite recently turned their back on Husseyn and this infuriated Husseyn. In the middle of the attempt to regain the Christian group's trust, he falls victim to a trivial matter. The news that a Christian man shot Husseyn Tchelebi created even more tension in the emotionally charged environment. The area's racist forces wanted to turn the aggression against the entire Christian population and a small spark could be the cause to ignite the enormous powder keg. But the Tchelebi family acted completely exemplary and calmed down their supporters by explaining what occurred as a tragic accident. The following Friday a collection was started for the benefit of the Turkish defense force. Who would even dare to question it? The Christian diocese in Midyat was not late to contribute generously. But the one who paid the most, counted per member in the entire country, was the Syriac Orthodox diocese in Istanbul. The Turkish-Islamic dark forces had reached their goal of scaring the already anxious and threatened minority to flight. During the following months, hundreds of families from Midyat and other Turabdin fled their homes.

While the hateful pot boiled fully, a young man from the village — we may choose to call Osman — abducted a Christian woman from the area. According to him, this was completely according to her free will. The woman's parents had of course no possibility to express themselves and therefore no police report was made. Osman worked in the same village as Mecide Pire, the same Mecid who was the main cause of the great conflict in the Gül case. The Muslim Brotherhood was banned as a party, but in secret, they worked hand in hand with the local Muslim religious representatives. The group consisted of a handful of dangerous elements, but they had the entire believing crowd behind them.

One of the group's leaders, Mullah Zubeyr from the village of Arnas, was happy about what Osman accomplished. Zubeyr with his men wanted to make a big show of the event and show the people in the area that the group really existed. During a meeting in the mosque, a decision was taken to interrogate the unhappy girl publicly in front of a crazy people. She would confess publicly that she completely voluntarily took the decision to marry Osman. This so-called public confession's main purposes were firstly to humiliate the Christian group

and secondly to demonstrate the Muslim Brotherhood's dynamic strength. The demonstration became the first of its kind.

After the Friday prayer, a large crowd gathered outside the city hall to hear the newly converted girl's confession. According to eyewitnesses, between ten and fifteen thousand people had gathered in the large square. About ten loudspeakers had been placed around the square so that everyone would hear the interrogation. The girl's parents were to be there by force since she was a minor. After a while, a car cortege arrived with the girl's parents in military escort with live weapons because a lynch mob atmosphere prevailed in the roaring crowd. A rough male voice was heard from the loudspeakers that the girl's parents had arrived at the city hall. A booing well echoed from the houses around the square. The man asked the people to instead listen to the short "wedding ceremony". A weak female voice was heard saying: "I, NN, chose voluntarily to convert to Islam." The entire gathered crowd cheered loudly by throwing their caps, fezzes and whatever they had in their hands into the air. "Allah u ekber" the shout of the entire sea of people in the square was deafening.

Hanna Demircioglu, Christian from Midyat, had taken some friends with him and visited the event. She and the company from Estel had noticed Hanna on the truck bed. The man Keko got curiosity. He parked his truck on the outskirts of the square just behind the crowd with the car's nose towards Midyat. He climbed up on the truck's bed to see the entire tragedy with his own eyes. They had reached the breaking point and moved in that direction where the truck was. They had confused youths in the middle of the big mess who incited up to a frenzy. Osman and the others, a whole hostile group of Islamists, were apparently instructed by their leaders to attack Hanna and those who were in the truck. The man who warned Hanna was aware that in such an atmosphere anything could happen. Osman, who abducted the underage woman with violent action, in a step to be brought to justice, had been promoted to deputy chief in the population registration bureau which was the first stop for all contacts with the local authority.

MIDYAT CULTURAL ASSOCIATION – p. 80

Cooperation among the Aramean ethnic group such as kinship, camaraderie, party, district affiliation, and similar security-creating forums of togetherness was in association form, which is why publicly registered associations with a board and membership register did not exist. Midyat football club existed already from the 1930s and in later years district football clubs like Isik Spor, Chalma Celik and some corporate teams that appeared for shorter periods were added.

In 1970 a cultural association was formed in Midyat. The initiators were youths who had studied or worked in the metropolis Istanbul. The association was registered under the name "Midyat Culture Association". Even though the association was not a direct branch of the Assyrian Democratic Organization, ADO, which operated mostly in the metropolis Istanbul, it was strongly colored by the mentioned organization's thoughts and ideas. It was legal to form associations in Turkey but the local police force was to have full insight into the organization's activities. At the annual meeting, a state official was to be present with the

right to refuse certain persons to be on the board. All correspondence was to be in Turkish and all activities were to be approved by police and military. Only cultural activities were allowed to be carried out. But what would these cultural activities be? Well, among other things the following:

- To be present at Turkish national holidays and contribute financially to carry these out
- To celebrate Atatürk's death day and attend the ceremony with a proper flower wreath at his statue
- To strengthen the sense of citizenship with the Turkish culture

The association had a half-hearted official program as above but in it, activities were carried out according to an own agenda. During the first year, the association started a course for students attending junior high school in the city of Midyat and Estel. Study circle was held in the church's premises. At the same time, there was only one school at the junior high level for the entire region. The youths who participated in the courses performed better in school than those who did not attend the courses. This was actually a so-called homework help course. The association employed about fifty youths during the entire summer break. The performance ran for several evenings and the income supplemented the association's treasury. King *AHIKAR* was a successful theater performance with several nights of showing. During school holidays in the summer, the youths arranged theater plays that no one saw before. The youths also arranged excursions on Sundays to monasteries and other cultural places.

But what annoyed the local police was that every Sunday about twenty youths from the association's youth section visited one of the city's churches to show the people that they were available if anything unwanted should happen against the population. After the services, the youths informed the church visitors that they existed and got the opportunity to get better acquainted with the people. Thereafter they took a turn in front of the police station to remind even the police that they exist.

The association's culture section, through Ilyas Shahin and Abrohom Garis (nowadays priest), published a simple monthly magazine named "*Kolo D-Turabdin*" (Voice of Turabdin) which was carefully distributed to certain members (see image p. 230). This type of activity was of course completely prohibited by the state power and therefore the leaflet was stopped shortly after its inception with some harassment during interrogation. It turned out that it was one of the members (N.N.) who snitched to the police. Even though he got some fist blows on his jaws from the other youths when he was revealed, the matter was not made better and the damage had already been done. Ilyas and Abrohom were forced to leave the country head over heels. After this event, visits to the association premises became sparser for fear of police harassment.

One day the lawyer Abdulla Timur came strutting into the association and complained to the board about why he had not been invited to the association's activities and applied for membership on the spot. People suspected that Abdulla Timur had a collaboration with the police and his application for membership in the association was regarded as infiltration. People withdrew from the association and the next coming annual meeting it was decided to

dissolve the association. The association lived only four years with the peak in 1973 when they had activities. According to newspaper ads in the local press (*Turan şehir* 24-1972) the initiators of the formation of the association were: Nail Soysal, Hanna Tahan, Jakub Ercan, and Benjamin Halefoglu. Board members were Nail Kul, Sabo Sabooglu, Nail Soysal, Anisik, Jakub Ercan, Hanna Tahan, Benjamin Halefoglu. (see image Kenan 231). In 1973 it was Yililmaz Ruya and in 1974 it was Nail Soysal. Kerim was chairman of the board, very active in the association, and after Nail Soysal he took over the chairman's gavel, but the association was dissolved in the autumn of the same year. Several names enriched the association life: Ibrahim Kuyumcu, Ilyas Shahin, Dr. Edvart Maloke, Fikri Ercan, Sabri Sittike, Adnan Can, Isa Zahrabaye, Shefik Zean, Fikri Kerkinni and several others who had been active during shorter periods. But those who constituted the backbone of the association with organizing social activities were the youths from the northern district.

REGARDING MIDYAT'S LOCAL PRESS In the early 1960s Melek Gunduz with his brothers began publishing a weekly newspaper *TURAN SEHIR* (Voice of the Tur Mountains). Responsible publisher was Melek Gunduz, editor Nail Saliba-Soysal. The newspaper came out twice a week, but the reading culture or need for reading did not exist among the citizens. The only thing one was in need of was to read a letter that came from the son or young relative in military service. The sender of the letter wrote only greetings and the rest he treated as the "holy service". Largely all letters from guys in the army were copies of each other. The longing for the letter was to get a sign of life from the person in question, the rest were just lies about how good the guy had it. Beyond letter writing, the common citizen in the area had no need for reading skills, for not a single city dweller had the Turkish language as mother tongue. Written documents were only authority papers that one did not want to acknowledge.

Later another newspaper came out as a competitor to *Turan Şehir*. It was called *MIDYAT POSTASI*, published by Ilyas Goksu with partner Hanna Dabe Sado-mance. The newspaper also came out twice a week. Both newspapers had their own printing press so one could order printed paper materials, but mostly this work applied largely with and for authorities. The newspapers announced important phone numbers, public court rulings, information for authorities and other public authority announcements and more. In *Turan Şehir*, Thursday, May 3, 1972, one could read the following news: "*Şai velet Esmer İcconun oğlu İsa*" – İsa İcco's estate was to be sold in a public auction. Someone or some authority persons were to sell the property against the debt. The bank and mortgaged İsa İcco's fixed property. Any loans were regulated at the debt. At this time İsa with wife were dead a long time ago and the question was: who had borrowed the money in the family's name? And who sold the property? They had no borrowers. More than a hundred hectares of dry land were knocked down that day.

THE CITY'S SANCTUARIES – p. 82

In Midyat there were not as many churches as in other communities in Turkey, counted per inhabitant. The city's inhabitants were more inclined to work, whereby many worked hard for a more decent life. People probably didn't have much time to build more churches or had by

tradition before conflicts based on religious grounds, which led to them settling for the existing number of churches.

The oldest church, Mor Ahisnoyo, was built at the end of the 5th century. The church building was actually from the beginning a sun worshipper temple and was converted to a church shortly after Christianity's arrival to the area. The altar's architecture clearly testifies to this. The church, or the temple, was built on a hill that watched over the entire community. A fortress-like work that was unusually large for its time.

The century after, the Mor Hobil Monastery was founded east of the city center in memory of the saint Hobil. Monastic life was a new phenomenon in Christianity and many youths competed about who would be best among the monks within the corps. The monk Hobil was from Midyat and therefore Midyat's people built a large church in his memory. A short time thereafter the Mor Abrohom Church was built wall to wall with Mor Hobil, probably by the Byzantine occupation power to honor the saint Abraham who was from Constantinople and one of the king's vassals. The monastery is located only a few hundred meters distance from the cathedral with a completely different architecture. It is grander and higher, probably to come a bit closer to God. These large buildings were erected at the poor farmer's expense. Not enough with the immense labor force that the local population was forced to provide, the farmers also supported all these monks who were in constant conflict with each other.

The Mor Sharbel-Mor Yakob Monastery north of the city with a smaller church and occasional properties around was probably built in the 1600s by monks with families who fled from the village of Karshaf (Kfarshomaa) to Midyat. Karshaf was a completely Aramean Christian community until the 1600s when suddenly the village disappeared from the Christian map. The monastery in Midyat was confiscated by the Turkish military power in 1925 and rebuilt into barracks. The inhabitants of the district felt forced to build a new Orthodox church at the current location under the same name. (Read more about the building project on page 86).

The Mor Schmuni Church was also built during the 1600s. The Sefer clan were the main initiators of the construction. Mor Barsavmo Church was built at the beginning of the 20th century on the ruins of a smaller chapel. Saint Mary Church (Sankta Maria) in southern Midyat, a smaller chapel, probably from the 1300s, was built during the same period when the patriarchate was divided in two. The church is located a stone's throw from the cathedral. The Catholic church, a smaller church, was built in the 1870s but was abandoned by its congregation during the First World War. Only ruins remain. The Protestant church was built at the beginning of the 20th century by the wealthy Hirmiz clan. Midyat's only mosque was built in 1915, in contrast to the newly built Protestant church that dominated the entire cityscape. There are also other small memorial sites consisting of some erected stones or a fallen stone wall called holy places after various saints.

This is what the religious map looked like in 1965, when the city of Midyat was experiencing its best years:

- Mort Schmuni Church: 1 bishop, 2 priests with about 150 families
- Mor Barsavmo Church: 2 priests with about 200 families
- Mor Sharbel Church: 2 priests with about 120 families
- Mor Ahisnojo Church or the cathedral: 2 priests with about 120 families

Number of youths attending deacon training under the church's direction: During school holidays, about 300 children and youths; during school time, about 150. The number of higher-ranking deacons reached 20, and other deacons about 100.

Protestant congregation: 1 priest who was called for everyday duties, with about 30 families. The congregation's main service and preaching were conducted in Arabic. The impressive church stood in the middle of the hill. The language was a statement against their mother church. The missionaries who founded the congregation spoke Arabic.

Catholic congregation: 1 priest with a smaller church in the southern part of the city and about 20 families. The congregation's reading and language culture was the same as the Protestants'. The Mosque Imam "Mulla Ali" was from the city of Nahrozo. Even though he was born and raised by Kurdish parents in the Midyat culture, he liked to speak Arabic. He knew the Aramean language like everyone but in public never a word. He considered the language was Christian, which is why he didn't want to be involved.

Midyat's mosque was built in the middle of burning Seyfo under the name "Cevat Pasha Cami". Cevat was the local leader of the Ittihat-Tarakki movement, probably the construction was financed by the mentioned Turkish-Muslim movement. The entire construction, from the foundation to the minaret's highest crescent, was hoisted and executed by Christian Arameans. The minaret was added in 1925 by the builder Malke Brahim. The number of adult male visitors in the 1960s barely sufficed for the number required to conduct Friday prayer. Among Muslims, it is a requirement that the number of participants in Friday prayer must be at least 40 men for the prayer to be maintained.

THE MOR SHARBEL PROJECT – p. 84

Shortly after the end of the Second World War when the Midyat people recovered from the war's devastation, many families began to build new houses in the northern part of the city. In the early 1950s, more and more began to ask themselves if one shouldn't build a church in the district. The monastery north of the district was destroyed and converted into military barracks. The hope of getting the monastery back from the military was gone forever.

A new church! Where? How to finance the construction? In Turkey, it was forbidden to build churches. But the need to build a church in the district was great. A large meeting took place on a Sunday afternoon in the spring of 1955. The meeting was held on the plot where the church was later built. To this meeting, the entire district was invited and Abrohom Sherro got the people's trust to drive the issue further. First, it was about getting a building permit, which was the most difficult task to manage. Abrohom, who went under the name Maksi Biro, succeeded with the help of his good contacts within the municipality to arrange a

promise of an oral building permit. Official or written building permits to build churches were not granted, and therefore district inhabitants were allowed to renovate or restore the dilapidated Mor Sharbel monastery but move this a hundred meters further down.

Ishak Shabo was a good friend of the governor in Mardin and that part of the contacts showed green light for the construction. The architectural competition came by itself since most of the district's inhabitants were builders and everyone wanted to be involved and plan. But for the project to get started as soon as possible it was Maksi and the builder Jakob Brahim who had the last word. Maksi got to lead the project and highest responsibility.

Sunday in April 1956 All residents of the neighborhood were called to an open meeting. The meeting place was again on the plot. Standing on the open field, the final decision for the first spade was taken, while the assembly officially elected Touma Rhavi as chairman of the new congregation and Maksi Biro as treasurer. There was no need for boards or minute-taking. Everyone participated wholeheartedly without making any demands.

During the same meeting, it was agreed that each family would contribute one hundred lira, but gladly more. Families who were well off could contribute more, and those who could not afford it would contribute less, according to their means. The first spade was to be taken the following Sunday, but the death of Ibrahim Shabo delayed this until the mourning period was over.

The weekend of Ascension Day, 1956, which always falls on a Thursday, was declared by Bishop Afrem as the day to lay the foundation for the new Mor Sharbel Church. More than two hundred volunteers from the entire city gathered there early in the morning with their shovels, hoes, and spades and began digging the ground to lay the foundation.

Four large stones were taken from the ruins of the mother monastery and placed as the foundation at four corners. The diocesan bishop Afrem, all priests, and many people from all over Midyat were gathered for the first spade at this holy building project. After a simple religious ceremony, the bishop threw the first cement spade into one of the corners.

During the same day, before the evening mass, the massive workforce managed to complete the entire deep foundation and even more than one meter above the ground. Father Makko could not contain his joy, so he led the work team for a quick evening mass. The first mass in Mor Sharbel Church was thus held on the open construction site the same day the foundation was laid.

The women baked several heaps of bread and made a large pot of soup from dried apricots for lunch for everyone present. But there were not enough plates to serve all. Therefore, first those who worked on the construction ate, then the rest, and lastly the dozen or so children who came to see the construction work.

The children sat on the ground, like everyone else, in groups of four around a communal plate, each with a small piece of bread in hand. In the shared plate, they took a smaller scoop of the sour, sludgy soup. And since it was leftovers from the large pot, there were also foreign

objects in the plate besides the fruit pieces. It was not polite to complain about the contents. Even worse was that there was only one spoon for four children, so they ate in turn. This was what they complained about and wanted their own spoons, but that was not allowed. The one who complained got a sharp reprimand and was kicked in the backside. The project dragged on over time, and construction continued as contributions came in. The then Prime Minister's envoy in 1958, brother Ethem Menderes, came to Midyat. Some gentlemen from the city asked him for help, whereupon the gentleman financed the entire roofing.

THE CLERGY – p. 86

Until Seyfo, the bishopric was so poorly managed that a dozen bishops wandered back and forth among the people completely according to their own pleasure. During a period of nearly six hundred years, there was a self-proclaimed patriarch in the village of Saleh, only half a mile (5 km) north of Midyat, with some bishops around Turabdin who mostly ordained churchmen from their own family. Turabdin's ecclesiastical leaders were so ill-omened that it was not possible to clarify who had the responsibility within the ravaged office. When European missionaries came to the area in the 19th century, large groups converted to Catholicism and Protestantism. Thanks to the monk (later patriarch) Elias Shaker's efforts with several visits to Turabdin, many returned to the mother church. The Seyfo catastrophe annihilated ninety percent of the people and the clergy to the brink of extinction. The church's six hundred years of mismanagement thus died of itself.

Turabdin Diocese's Bishops during the 20th Century

In Midyat, the diocese was led by a bishop from the village of Arnas named Shamun dbé Gezzo for a short period. He was followed by Bishop Zeytun from the village of Anhil, also for a short period. Bishop Yakob Azir Grigo came to the office hoping to organize the ravaged office but he disappeared as quickly as everyone else before him. After him, the strong priest Afrem Sefer emerged in 1915.

- Bishop Tuma Aras: 1920–1946
- Bishop Afrem Bilgic: 1952–1974
- Yakob from Aynvardo: 1974–1976 (a temporary solution after Afrem Bilgic's resignation)
- Ilyas Cankaya: 1982–1984
- Samoel Aktas: 1985–Present

After Seyfo, the patriarch reorganized the ravaged Turabdin diocese into an office with a bishop's chair in the Mor Schmuni church in Midyat. The first bishop was named Touma Aras, originally from the village of Arnas but born and raised in the small village of Erzioglu near Omid (present-day Diyarbakir). Touma and his brother Shamoun had been left by their parents to the Zafaran monastery near Mardin already when they were small children. Until he came to Midyat in bishop's uniform, Touma was completely unknown to the public. The

establishment in Midyat received the newly appointed bishop with pomp and circumstance; a different bishop, young in fine clothes with big-city features, well-groomed beard and beautiful eyes, a figure that exceeded everyone's expectations.

"Oh, oh, what a human! This is a gift from above," were the first comments.

Bishop Touma was eloquent, social, charismatic, pleasant in his contacts, and even better he knew all the area's cultures and languages. By his side, he had his brother Shamun in monk's clothes. A broad-shouldered, terrifying figure with one eye and a large tufted beard who in the middle of daylight could scare full-grown people in alleys. At night he resembled a monster in robber attacks that one heard in horror stories. The monk Shamun wandered the country as bailiff for his brother's office.

The bishop ruled the diocese with an iron hand so the entire clergy and all other congregation leaders danced to his drum. His firm religious principles put an end to the centuries-old mismanagement of the diocese, which gladdened the common traditionalist. In a fairly short time, he took the entire diocese into his claws. But who was this human who hid behind this handsome facade?

Bishop Touma with his brother, the solitary monk Shamun, grew up in a poor family. He was educated at the Zafaran monastery and in his youth lived in Omed, which opened his views and then wound his way through the time's tumultuous events to the center of power. He was power-hungry and money-grubbing of gross proportions. According to the monastery tradition of the time, bishops and monks did not eat meat. But he ate fish of the highest quality in quantities while the population did not have the possibility to even lick the fish bones. He did not eat meat, but he could take two kilos of butter-fried eggs for a meal. What stung the eyes of the poor human was, however, mostly his habit of feeding his horse with high-quality raisins while people lacked bread on the dining table.

Before the criticism began to grow within the diocese, the bishop died at a young age, probably of extreme obesity. The news reached Midyat a single day in the autumn of 1946 and the same evening those who had keys to the bishop's residence opened the pillows that were filled with jingling gold coins. Shamun was for the moment in the Raite area and when he got the death news he came hurriedly at night to Midyat to take over the brother's power. But the pillows were already emptied and re sewn without trace of violence. Shamun fought with all means in silence for the brother's estate but without major success. A short time thereafter he met his fate on a toilet visit at Hobil Haydari's, probably of the same family as the brother. The priest brothers in their role as church responsible traveled around the entire region shortly after Seyfo and came into contact with occasional survivors and a lot of tender church premises. In the abandoned communities, the brothers collected all church treasures that came in their way. May God forgive their sins. The holy brothers came to Midyat from nowhere and disappeared as quickly and into nowhere. Not a memorial stone, not even a text line have they left behind.

Pastoral Care in Hateful Competition

The second quarter of the 20th century was dominated in Midyat's clergy by two priests who competed with each other and used every possible means for the one to destroy the other. The gentlemen prayed in silence to God that He would take the life of the other before they began praying "Our Father".

One was Chori (Vicar) Gevriye from the Kashro clan, a traditional priest family. According to legend, Gevriye was the eleventh priest in line within the family tree. The priest family boasted that the clan descended from the Levites and thus related to Patriarch Aaron. The priest Gevriye served in the Mort-Schmuni church in direct connection to Bishop Touma's diocese.

The other, Priest Circo, originally from the village of Kfarze, was a wise and eloquent man who exceeded the community's expectations. Circo had grown up in the middle of the socio-political mosaic society and was a suitable helper in the newly built diocese. Friendly in his contacts and had good relations with the area's ruling elite. The priest gentlemen greeted each other in the public space as if they were two brothers but in reality, they were deeply hateful towards each other. If one were to greet a government official the other could not sleep before he found out what the matter concerned.

The diocese's bishop died in 1946 and a new era in Midyat's bishopric began. The patriarch was for the moment in the city of Homs in Syria and was banned by the Turkish regime. Contacts with the patriarch took place by letter. A suitable candidate for bishop did not exist in Turabdin. Midyat diocese's priests were forced to shake out a name for a suitable monk to propose to the patriarch. But the rival priests always put spokes in the wheels.

The name that priest Gevriye proposed for bishop Circo did not agree to, on the contrary. This disagreement lasted more than five years and during the time both gentlemen were to be the patriarch's representatives. Circo was to ordain his eldest son Numan as priest but he did not make it before the competitor ordained his own son.

First Gevriye's children and then Circo's were ordained to priesthood in rapid succession. First Gevriye's children, even though none of these young priests had any congregation. The rivalry for Midyat's dominion ended and it began to be calm in the diocese thanks to this.

In 1952 Bishop Afrem from the village of Bote took office as bishop for the diocese. The spring thereafter Gevriye versus Circo was the new bishop candidate. The same year Gevriye's health deteriorated and he became bedridden, but he was not completely weakened. The summer of the same year the angel of death said: "He may not leave earthly life and travel to heaven before his rival."

So first Circo died in priest attire on Easter Monday, completely healthy, while the other lay on his deathbed. After a short time, Gevriye also died in high priest attire. Gevriye was buried in the Mor Abrohom monastery to the left of the entrance and Circo was buried two meters from him on the right side.

The priest gentlemen Gevriye and Circo's race for Midyat's dominion was inherited by respective child priests. Gevriye's son, priest Abdalla, and Circo's son, priest Numan, lived in the same spirit as the parents until the flight snatched them away. (Blessed be God the creator!)

In 1973 Bishop Afrem was over eighty years old. The years had weakened him and he wanted to retire. A fierce discussion broke out in the diocese about who would represent the diocese until a suitable candidate for bishop was found. Quite unexpectedly came the monk Isa Cicek (later bishop) to Midyat to lead the office. He should not have done that before he had time to hang off his outer clothes.

The news reached priest Abdalla's ears and without delaying hurriedly he rushed to the bishop's residence, where the monk was. He pushed Cicek out of the bishop's chair, dealt him some powerful cane blows around the body and took a stranglehold on him around the neck as one necks a chicken. He dragged him all the way to the yard where Abdalla dealt him a powerful slap and pushed him out onto the street. Cicek fought back with all power and pulled the big Abdalla in the beard until a large tuft came loose from the beard. Priest Abdalla dragged out the monk by force and threatened to kill him if he would show himself in Mor Abrohom church again.

When the diocese's highest council in 1952 chose to ordain the potter priest Afrem as bishop, since his wife and an infant had been killed during Seyfo, it was for lack of a more suitable monk for the task. To become a bishop one must usually be a monk and not a priest. Priest Afrem had served decades through difficult times without being questioned. So who was this beloved shepherd who herded his flock for more than three decades?

The priest's son Markus grew up in the village of Bote in the early 1900s in the midst of ongoing internal strife between the father's congregation on one side and the aggressive new Catholic-Protestant missionary activity on the other.

A smaller group from the small Bote congregation broke away from the mother church, declared themselves Catholics and immediately started the work of forming their own congregation. At the same time as the Christian group entered a protracted and bitter battle among themselves, a young Kurdish man named Ramazan joined the new Christian missionary congregation. It never occurred before that a Muslim man converted to Christianity. The area's Muslims became completely furious at Ramazan and without delay, he was declared outlawed. The Christian majority used the opportunity and in turn declared the new Catholics as outlawed. The area's highest religious representatives forced the Catholics and Ramazan to leave the community and their assets were shared to the closest within the family. Ramazan traveled all the way to Rome where he educated himself as a priest and returned to the Middle East as a Christian missionary named Rami. The missionary priest Rami died in 1956 in the city of Aleppo at a high age. The Bote Catholics wandered to the city of Mosul where they got asylum and never returned.

Bishop Afrem grew up in the middle of this environment and had bitter memories from the father's grueling priestly life. In 1912 the father died and the same year Afrem, very young, shouldered his father's task.

Deacon Markus was ordained priest by the banned patriarch Abdulmesih I in the Mor Sharbel monastery in Midyat on Saint Mor Afrem's day in 1912 and therefore he changed his name from Markus to Afrem. After only three years the war came to the area and the priest's wife and their little daughter were killed in the village's church. Afrem became a widower for the rest of his life. Priests may according to tradition never marry again.

Bishop Afrem lived according to Christian values, was firm to the church's traditions and never gave way to pressures from individuals for own interests. Afrem was offered large sums of money to ordain certain persons as priests but since he did not consider them suitable for the task he refused to ordain them. He was humble, shared the single coin he got to the poor, lived God-fearing, down-to-earth and was Christian in his full meaning.

The bishop was a little withdrawn in his role as the diocese's highest responsible. Bishop Afrem's inauguration in the city of Homs in Syria in 1953 became a rather comic ceremony that one had never witnessed before. According to the law of the time, the priestly ordination was not valid because he was ordained by a banned patriarch. Patriarch Afrem I (the patriarch was also named Afrem) was priest Afrem's predecessor.

Should Priest Afrem be ordained anew as priest earlier? According to church rules all he performed such as baptism, wedding, funerals and more during the years would be declared invalid. Priest Afrem was stripped of everything regarding the priesthood or was deposed and ordained anew, first as priest and then confession, penance and was embraced by the holy sacrament. The day after as bishop. Not to create religious unrest in Turabdin this was kept secret for the past 41 years.

The genocide of 1915 ended with the Turabdin Arameans being almost erased, survivors (Seyfo remnants) were in economic bankruptcy and the people's spiritual elite with the clergy were liquidated. Churches, sanctuaries lay in ruins or occupied, it took a whole generation to get on their feet. The youths who grew up after the genocide were not educated, state school was non-existent, own national schools were forbidden even though Arameans had minority rights. The youths in their spare time gathered in their districts and fought with youths from other districts, probably these belligerent youths gave vent to revenge because of their Seyfo trauma.

The winter half-year every Sunday afternoon hooligan groups attacked each other with stones. This resulted in several being injured. It was about to become tradition in Midyat. The new Bishop Afrem with his governing council saw the seriousness in this and acted wisely. He opened religious schools in all churches. In the Mort-Shmuni church, the young teacher Bedros Shushe was employed with a symbolic salary and shortly child education flourished into a multi-class school more attractive than a state school. Public permission for education did not exist, it was only to teach the boys to become deacons but the divinely gifted teacher

Bedros Shushe had much greater ambitions. The teaching went on all year round and during holidays hundreds of activities were arranged with English homework, courses, censures, culture competitions, theater plays and more. The legend Bedros taught nearly twenty years in Midyat.

In 1975 Bishop Afrem thanked for himself and retired to the monastery.

Mor Barsaumo Church

Priest or Chori Numan is the son of a priest family. He succeeded his father in Mor Barsaumo church and was priest in the congregation until he emigrated. Chori Numan was very smart and capable in his profession. He had good qualities to keep relations with the public in balance and to handle contacts with the difficult-to-handle authorities in a very good way. His power increased more and more over the prosperous congregation. Some critics or envious persons raised their eyebrows and questioned the family's economic successes, but Numan was successful in his profession just as much as he was in private life. Mr. Chori Numan was a member of the municipal school board in the 1970s at the same time as he was the patriarch's representative for two years during the 70s.

In the early 60s deacon Ado Malle was ordained priest for the same congregation after pressures from some influential families. Despite a little trouble in the beginning the congregation's two priests could cooperate like two brothers.

Mort Schmuni Church

Priest Abdulla is the son of a priest family. He succeeded his father in Mort Schmuni church. The family considered themselves as a self-evident office family and heirs to the priesthood like the Jews' Levites and thus had precedence to represent God. Abdulla was a large man of Hercules figure and people saw him as a foundation in the Christian church in the city. The little human who met him the first time on the street stopped for a while to be able to grasp how he would handle the situation. In the dark it would be even worse. Priest Abdulla became chori-vicar in older days. His older brother Chori Malke served officially in the same church but he was mostly traveling around the region where there were no priests.

Mor Ahisnoyo Church

The church was rebuilt after 560 years of decay. The entire district with the help of other city dwellers rebuilt the church in relatively short time. During the same time the wise deacon Abrohom Hecco was ordained priest and quite immediately he reorganized the genuine congregation into a lively congregation. Mr. Abrohom was a leader figure of statesman character. Abrohom Hecco was an eloquent preacher and during his time as priest he could plead the people's cause against state authorities well. Priest Afrem Bashe served beside Chori Abrohom Hecco when needed.

Mor Sharbel Church

Serving priest was Makko Avrohum. The older priest father Makko formed a new congregation in the newly built Mor Sharbel church in the early 60s. His adult sons were not financially dependent on him why he served more than twenty years completely without salary. The few coins he received in alms from the congregation members he himself went around and shared to his flock from the needy. He shared alms even to poor from other religions. The priest father lived according to strict Christian tradition and therefore he received great respect and was loved by everyone in the city. In 1962 deacon Jakob Sittike was ordained priest in the same church. He and the older priest cooperated according to religious decrees. The Catholic church had a priest. The Protestants a priest. All these churches were financed by the congregation members.

The church management paid the priests' salaries, arranged sustenance for temporary guests and visitors, paid salaries to the caretakers and teachers who taught hundreds of children in the churches' own premises and not least the churches took care of a dozen mentally disabled and elderly people who lacked relatives. The city's priests worked full time and performed their religious duties which included prayer moments at least twice a day. They also performed services on Sundays and other religious holidays, baptisms, weddings, visits to sick, funerals and more. The members were proud of their churchmen.

The City's Social Safety Net

No municipal social safety net existed in Midyat. Social security was rooted in tradition both among Christians and Muslims. No homeless or starving people were allowed to exist. According to tradition, children or other closest relatives should take care of old and sick. Those who did not have relatives were taken care of by churches or monasteries. Foreign people who happened to be left at night in the city and did not have the possibility to stay overnight at inns sought a known person or knocked on the nearest door and asked to stay overnight. No one refused to receive a stranger, regardless of whether it was Christian, Muslim, Ezidi or belonged to another religion. In Aramean one said, according to the proverb, "the guest is God's guest". The guest received supper, overnight stay, breakfast and a piece of bread for the journey home.

In round figures there were one hundred individuals city dwellers who could not manage on their own. These were handicapped, orphans, elderly without relatives and economically very weak families. Handicapped with mobility impairments had a hard life, but it was far from sufficient. Some families unfortunately tried to "hide" or not show their handicapped children or relatives to the public.

There were not many orphans in the city. The occasional children that existed were adopted by families, and some of these adopted lost their parents fell clearly to the closest family. Childless did everything they could to give them a decent life, it could not always be done. The children used to be biological children of close relatives, to keep the inheritance within the immediate family.

There was an adopted boy in Midyat whose adoptive parents were Muslims and another Christian. A very unusual phenomenon. The boy was named Basim but called Baso. The parents had decided that Basim would be raised according to Christian values. The adoptive father, Shekho Sleymano, came with Basim to the church door on Sundays, left the son to participate in the services and came back after the service to fetch the boy.

The old who had relatives lived with dignity within the family. Those who lacked relatives had at least a roof over their heads and food for the day.

According to tradition, families who lost a relative would distribute the dead person's food ration to a poor person for a whole year, that is 365 days. The family thus gave a plate of food every evening to a needy person. On average, there were twenty households that shared supper every day, as a rule a plate of warm food with a piece of bread. If the poor person declined, because he or she had already received food from another family, one continued to look for the next.

Poor families with children without financial resources were mostly housed with a large farmer or in a church. The able-bodied adults helped in agriculture or worked as caretakers in the church. The children went to school like all other children. To all this came wandering beggars, mostly strangers who sought their way to churches after Sunday masses. City dwellers from Midyat did not beg. It did not belong to tradition to "degrade" oneself. In the first place, one made a counter-performance. Those who did not have financial possibility got their needs met in other ways, without being forced to ask for alms in public places.

CULTURAL LIFE – p. 94

Cultural life in the city of Midyat had ancestry from antiquity's glory days. Some festivals and holidays were celebrated for several days with pomp and circumstance, but time's political tooth and Christianity have planed on to the erasure limit. Left is a weak trace that one inherited through generations and today one interprets these traditions in one's own way.

An example that all Midyat residents have clear memories of is the celebration of "Tamuz". The evening to the first of July every family in the city threw and smashed a pot for Tamuz's honor. Who is this Uncle Tamuz? No. Tamuz is not any uncle. It is the month of July that one celebrates. Why should one celebrate just this month of all twelve? Some other person named Tammuz—Tammuzo, but it was not these persons that one celebrated. If one goes back to Babylonian mythology and reads about the god Tamuz, then there is one and it is that it was no other than the god Tamuz that one celebrated. Celebrating or remembering anniversaries of Tamuz is absolutely not a Christian religious holiday, but the day is celebrated also by other groups of the same culture but of other religion.

The saga of Shahmaran, in Kurdish "Shahe mara", which is told among Turkish-Muslim circles, is basically the saga of Queen Shamiram and Kurdistan's original address is exactly Turabdin. The saga was translated to Greek at the Hellenistic period and long later to Arabic

and Turkish. Paintings in small pictures with happy colors, 40-footed snake with female head, are sold in later years in the area to tourists as souvenirs.

We start with the cultural tradition's calendar. The night to New Year's Day the housewife cooked the tastiest and most expensive food she had. After supper the New Year's table was set and the whole family gathered around for the year's richest feast. On the table, a bottle of wine for the men in the family, nuts, fruits, dried sweets and more. But what was number one on the menu was the "Halave".

The period between New Year and Easter Lent is called "Bergindan". During the winter period people were mostly at home. One ate salted fatty meat for dinners. Three weeks before Easter Lent, which was a whole fifty days long, people fasted three days for Nineveh's people. The fast began on a Monday and ended on Thursday where one ate "Hintiye" for lunch after the service.

Thursday before the Great Lent, "Hano kritho"-celebration. Jum hamsho d'ravoye-tamis el sakare are remaining fragment memories of large carnivals that one celebrated pompously during glory times. Sunday evening, the day before Easter Lent was to begin, one ate the Bergindan period's fattiest dinner. Should one go around and ask people what they had eaten for dinner the answer would without exception be the same in all of Midyat: Bulgur with fatty meat.

The fasting period was a whole seven weeks and the main dish in the fast's food menu was nettle soup six days a week, day in and day out. He who could not cope with taking it chose syrup with bread. On Sundays it was a little different.

The 25th is the Annunciation of Virgin Mary. The day falls during the fasting period and in antiquity's time under same cultures, "Siboro" is a tradition. One does not celebrate the day solemnly in the city. But in the same week New Year's Day was celebrated in all Middle Eastern... Siboro is a tradition where one braided together cotton strings of three colors, red, white, blue and tied it on one's arm and fingers. The tradition cannot only be Christian because it exists also in other cultures.

Before the Easter weekend, while the services succeeded each other, another feverish activity went on. All families, regardless of class affiliation, had as their main menu Easter eggs, rice pudding, yogurt, freshly baked wheat bread and similar cold food. Meat was not forbidden but by tradition one did not eat during this weekend. The evening to the weekend one visited families who during the year had lost a relative. The first day the men went around to family and acquaintances to celebrate the holiday. The day after one visited the cemetery to distribute food to people. Of course, the poor came in first place.

The period between Easter and Pentecost is called "tarsh-turso". One does not fast during this period. June and July are the farmer's most intensive two working months during the entire year.

During late summer about ten holidays occur, the so-called "shahre", which one celebrated solemnly in different parts of Turabdin. "Shahro" (in singular form) is a holiday dedicated to different saints in the area. The most noteworthy of these were Mor Gabriel's shahro on August 6 and St. Mary monastery in the village of Hah on August 15. Thousands of adults, children, men and women, Christians and people from other religions, amused themselves all night with wild dances. During the Hah festival, the participants could go up to ten thousand. In the afternoon people slaughtered animals, partly as sacrifice to the saint and partly for supper. About ten Kurdish street musicians played "kemence"-music and sang in different places around the monastery in the free nature. People danced and participated in different cultural events until late at nights.

In the tracks of these nightly crowds followed crime in the form of petty theft and violence against women. He who had a young woman with him during these nightly parties was forced to intensely guard her, sometimes with live weapons, against greedy men. In 1962 a very serious honor-related crime happened. The area's Christian representatives, with the help of some Kurdish clan leaders, banned these festivities in the village of Hah.

Christmas was the biggest holiday and the one celebrated most in the city. Food stores were filled and the farmers, like other hand workers, who were far from the city, were home to celebrate the holiday. The sweet winter evening began with the Christmas celebration. Christmas Eve, after the church visit, one greeted close relatives who had lost someone within the family during the current year. Christmas Day, early in the morning, there were services in all churches. Christmas music came in full swing after the church visit and went on all morning. Many went around to family and acquaintances to celebrate the holiday. The children were happy and dressed finely and went around the district and congratulated everyone with coins and other small things. Rich families used to donate money instead of candy. This was the happiest moment the children experienced.

A classic wedding in Midyat lasted from Saturday afternoon to Monday.

Traditional Wedding

Traditionally the girl was mature at 14–16 years of age and she was the subject of everyone's assessment and considerations. Marriage between Christians and Muslims was strictly forbidden, even between different Christian denominations did not belong to the commonalities. Midyat's wealthy families liked to have their daughters married to people from big cities and preferably with youths who had higher education or belonged to rich families. Most who chose away Midyat's fine and handsome boys did not become happy in their marriage.

Boys were mature to marry at 17–18 years of age, but the impending military service often set obstacles. Preferably do military service first and marry after was a norm. It was not the young couple who found each other and then made a decision to marry, but it was the boy's family who chose a girl whose family belonged to the same class. A farming family or a family with a similar occupation would not ask to have their son married to a girl from "High

Society". Furthermore, rich man's children were considered frail and thus unsuitable for the physically heavy agricultural work.

Among the farming people in Midyat, there was a historical proverb that read: "He who falls in love in the district 'Methno', south of the city, had easier to get a bride."

Mostly it was the boy's older female family members who chose. They tipped the men in their family about a suitable girl. After careful considerations and a strong premonition that one would get the "yes"-answer from the girl's family, the boy's family clubbed their decision to go on a first meeting.

Often one knew each other and the boy had already looked at the girl on several occasions without the girl having an idea of what he had on his heart. A messenger used to meet the girl's parents in advance in secret to convey the family's wish in humility. The messenger spoke in fine terms about the boy and his qualities, what skills and talents he had. One could get a few days' reflection time even though the answer in the vast majority of cases would be "yes". No-answer could entail a protracted discord between the families.

Shortly after a "yes-answer" one went out publicly and spread the news to mark that the girl was now engaged, so that no other young man would see her as his. This led to all gossip and all speculations. The boy's extended family with the family's priest in the lead greeted the girl's extended family.

The girl would wear the shawl on her head as a symbol that she accepted the boy as her future spouse and that she was betrothed. From the girl's family with a headscarf as the first present from the boy, preparations for the engagement party would begin, and the boy's dress for the girl would also be bought.

A Saturday evening after supper the boy's family with their selected guests and the family's priest would visit the bride's family. With them, they would take some candy and small things, some snacks, the ring and a special cake baked especially for the occasion. In the bride family's house the engagement would be ceremonially consecrated with the rings.

During the simple and relatively short ceremony, the priest asked the future couple if they wanted each other out of love and not by force. The boy used to answer briskly, but the girl did not answer directly with a loud voice "yes" in front of the whole congregation, because it would be a little embarrassing for her to answer loudly. Why the priest asked the girl fatherly like this: "My daughter", the priest pronounced her name, "if you want to get engaged to this one", he pronounced the boy's name, "kiss my hand!" and he turned his gaze aside. The girl took the priest's hand and with lowered gaze slowly kissed it.

Afterwards one brought out the newly baked cake and while the priest stood between two witnesses from each side with the cake in his hands he broke the cake in two with the right hand. It was the witness who had the largest piece of the cake left in the hand who had inherited the happiness to his family. The priest got a large cake piece, twice as much candy and other snacks compared to other guests and left the party.

Now it was the musicians' turn to start the partying. Usually, the entertaining musicians were Kurds and also musically Kurdish. The Kurdish street music was derogatory to women of a certain nature, but in weddings and similar contexts no one reacted in the man's world, and from women's side there was no female gathering whatsoever.

The period between engagement day and wedding could be from a few months up to several years depending on circumstances; a year was a suitable time. During this time the families met several times and negotiated many things. What was most important during these discussions was the determination of the wedding day. The boy's family wanted a daughter-in-law as soon as possible, and the girl's wanted to ensure having taken their family several times and met each other.

Dowry was determined by the church and no one dared question this unless the boy's family voluntarily wanted to donate more to get the process to go smoother. The first and absolutely most important was the family's or clan's honor. An unwritten but important rule was that the girl should be absolutely physically whole and clean. Not even rumors that she flirted with other guys more than what the culture allowed were permitted. In that respect, the city's own girls and the region's girls absolutely had the highest requirements.

There were also much else of material nature to guarantee oneself about. Gold jewelry: quantity, measure and weight, carat. The gold should be bought, not borrowed, and that all gold jewelry should be available to the girl before the wedding. If the family's economy was strained one borrowed a piece of jewelry from a close relative in secret to meet the requirement until one could acquire an equivalent piece of jewelry in the future.

A modern wardrobe for the bride's clothing storage (worth an ox) with several dresses, from 4–5 up to 15 pieces, belonged to the discussion. The boy's family often refused to shop so much fabric and sew them, at the same time with the pretext that the bride could gain weight after the marriage, and that was usually true. Finally, one agreed on a promise never to let her be with a smaller number of dresses when the need arose.

A present for the girl's brother, or if brother was missing, to maternal uncle, for him to hand her over to the man. A revolver was a common requirement, but one could negotiate to a smaller present depending on the family's economy.

There were many unwritten rules that the families mutually respected. One of these was that the families would be friends forever and get mutual benefits with this, partly for the own nuclear family and partly for the whole clan. To integrate oneself with the city's socio-religious traditions was A and O in the context.

A month before the wedding it was time for the dowry. The boy's dad, a relative of his and the priest of course, went and greeted the bride's family. There should be another acquaintance to witness the dowry delivery. During the 1960s the church's norm for dowry was 400 lira (corresponding to the price of a young ox). In front of the kerosene lamp, every coin was counted very carefully. When everything was handed over to the girl's father under

the priest's happy inspection, he first took three to five lira to the priest and then a whole fiver or a tenner back to the girl's relative.

After this and all promises that were already fulfilled, the wedding was now near. If the agreed wedding promise should be broken and if the counterparty's all incurred costs double. If the boy's family should break its promise the family should pay back the counterparty's all incurred costs. He who broke the church's rules could be frozen out by the entire society. 99 percent of marriages lasted until death parted them.

Within Christianity marriage is a holy treaty. The man was allowed to reject his wife only if she has been unfaithful, and this was Midyat. In occasional cases where the man was sick and could not fulfill his manly duties the wife got the right to leave him, but one did one's best to keep it secret as far as possible hoping that the man would be cured.

After all promises were fulfilled and other social obstacle tests, a family member from the boy's family visited personally everyone in the neighborhood who had lost a relative during the last year and asked for permission to complete the wedding. Concerned families felt honored and sent back their warmest congratulations. Two days before the festivities, the families invited their guests orally. First on the list came the most favorable within the families.

Saturday after supper the guests arrived at the bridegroom's family. It is called "ulalio du Heno". The older guests were invited to the living room and the youths with a musician danced in the yard or on the roof if the weather allowed. All guests with the musician and the priest at the head went grandly to the girl's family with some candy and snacks. The women entertained the bride by coloring her fingers with "henna" as a marking that you nowadays belong to us.

While the adults danced to the bride, a dozen children gathered in the yard and got a bundle of small candy each. After a while one came back to the boy's family. Now the evening entertainment began in earnest and the dancing could have gone on until midnight. When the music silenced the youths played small sketches and other entertaining folk games as long as the guests were gathered in the yard.

On Sunday morning the youths began to gather again and the dancing immediately got started. In the afternoon the priest came to bless the bride's finest clothes that one had sewn for the purpose. After dressing, a napkin was spread between the bridegroom and the priest. Friends and the closest relatives, one by one, kissed the priest's hand, congratulated the boy for the bride suit and threw a smaller coin on the cloth as a fee to the priest. With blessing glances, the priest father stared with the corner of his eye at the coins and one who passed by checked the coins' denominations. The priest enclosed them with the coins without counting and put them in his pocket and went straight home to his happy wife.

Now it was time to fetch the new finely dressed dancing youths in the yard and the girls went in to the bride. They waited for the time until the bridegroom was properly tired. Now with

the bridal couple and the family member. An army of finely dressed youths with the bridegroom and the family's godfather hand in hand singing went to the bride's home. Well washed and made her up. It took time to prepare her, sometimes with the weather. In the front row loudly singing and dancing came the entire wedding procession back.

According to tradition, this was for the entire district to witness that the couple has joined together. The entire neighborhood went out on the street applauding and welcomed the new bridal couple. Well at the entrance a fire was burned in the middle of the yard, and the bridal couple walked around the fire three times from the left. This was an oath for the union. The fire's smoke went up to the sky so that God's angels would view it all and inscribe the holy promise.

At the door entrance, the bride took a knife with the right hand and drew a cross at the very top of the door arch (cultural-historical Aramean triumph symbol). A small pot with candy was smashed against the same spot where the bride drew the cross to drive away evil spirits that possibly had followed with her.

A whole crowd of children had followed the entire walk from the beginning and now it was time they got their reward. The bridegroom and other youths who were close friends of the family threw handfuls of small coins straight up into the air over the children, who flew like projectiles completely wildly towards the coins that fell on their heads and scattered over all corners. These laughing scenes with butting children ended with the boys inflicting one or another bump or a scratch, which made some leave the wedding place crying. The boys cried perhaps not from their injuries but because they sadly enough gathered too few coins.

Late in the afternoon everyone left the yard, for now it was time to set the table for a customary dinner for all invited guests (bulgur/rice with boiled meat and vegetable stew). A male representative from respective family came to the supper, and after the food it was time to wed the couple. The family priest with a deacon arrived at the site to perform the wedding. First the priest began with some hymns and then the long and boring ceremony began. In the old days it took even longer time, for the youths had needles with them and pricked the bridal couple's neck so they wouldn't fall asleep. Now it was time to leave the young couple to themselves.

The next day it was time for the invited guests to come to the new couple with presents. The bride sat on the podium with some girlfriends, and one by one they came with congratulations and left their presents. The presents could be headscarves, gold objects or other things. During the entire period it was their turn to be invited. Families invited all youths who helped at the party. The closest youths helped day and night, and now it was dinner and finest wine that was served. To this supper one offered a little alcohol. The festivities went on until late in the evening, but despite alcohol consumption, it never went overboard.

On Sunday the bride came back to her parents' home and stayed there to be fetched back to her new home on Sunday evening. The weekend after, Saturday and Sunday...

In the 1940s the priest's son Gabro fell in love with a young girl without going the traditional way to ask her parents for permission. He abducted her and the young couple hid with friends until one thought her family agreed to an agreement. He promised her a fairytale wedding festivity but failed with the silent diplomacy and it became known that the girl was kept hidden. It was not easy to convince her family about this. After a short time, no agreement was in sight. On the contrary, the positions became even more locked waiting for consent about marriage.

Gabro had made a big mistake and now it was serious. The threat from the girl's family hung heavy over the entire priest family. Gabro and the family hiding the girl got a difficult task to solve and were forced to seek help from Midyat's mayor Nuri Aziz. Nuri did not want to interfere in Christian people's internal affairs but he was forced to take responsibility as mayor. When the girl's family heard that Nuri was involved the threat of violence became more obvious. Ibrahim Shabo could not stand passive and silent in this situation, he was forced to take sides in this very threatening situation.

After a few days of tense waiting the positions became clearer. On one side stood the Abdalla Slivo family with Nuri Aziz as support and on the other side the Avrohum Hadodo family with Ibrahim Shabo. The threat from the Avrohum family to get the girl back was strong. But in silence, an intensive trial of strength was going on from both sides.

One Sunday morning where all men usually were free after the morning service, hell broke loose in the open field below the houses in the district "Guharre". About thirty youths attacked each other with stones, clubs and all sorts of implements. The fight went on all morning and resulted in several persons being severely injured.

The entire district made great efforts to separate the fighting groups and the match ended 3-2 to the Avrohum Hadodo family. With threat of continued violence the priest family was forced to capitulate and leave the girl to the parents. The parties were forced to make peace with each other to avoid resumed fights.

Death

Since the beginning death has been a sorrowful ceremonial gathering for survivors. Man has sought answers to the riddle with the heavenly kingdom and with hope to see each other again. The Aramean culture has had the same process with taking care of the dead's remains since the sun worship time.

We start from the deathbed: When a human lay in his last breath, one turned him on his back with the face towards the sunrise. An older relative dripped a little water with a spoon in the mouth to soothe the last breath. At respiratory arrest, s/he was declared dead. First one washes the body with lukewarm water, dresses the body with clean clothes and last wraps the body with a white piece of fabric, so-called kefen. Some believing older people acquire a cloth with Jesus' image embroidered on (manufactured in Jerusalem) to lay on the face at the last rest. The family priest arrives and with care the body is laid in the stretcher. Funeral

service is held and slowly one carries the body on shoulders with priests and deacons singing hymns all the way to the cemetery place with epistle and bible reading and burial. Coffin did not exist then, only at the end of the twentieth century was the coffin taken into use.

Each clan had its built-together two-chamber mausoleum, one for men and one for women's burial. Then one walled up the entrance door to avoid smell spreading to the surroundings.

A death arrival to burial took only two to three hours then everyone came to the deceased's family. The men sat in the living room and smoked unrestrainedly. Women in another room crying in chorus, after sunset it was a sin to cry. The mourning time lasted a week or to the nearest Sunday.

On the funeral day the family's Godfather/Qariwo cooked the food for all mourners in the house. Neighbors and acquaintances came to the mourning family with cooked supper in turn as long as the mourning days lasted. As a rule a dish of bulgur covered with fried egg omelet. At every supper the family priest sat at the front and the men in hierarchical order, then two women and children. If the family was poor the neighbors helped with dry food items. The entire family's women wrapped their heads with black cloth up to and including the ninth or fortieth day. If the deceased was young, this could be for a year.

According to tradition the deceased's family should bake bread and share in the church after evening mass on the third, ninth, fortieth and on the one-year anniversary. Not enough with this, the family should also every evening share the dead's half ration, a plate of cooked food with a piece of bread to a widow or needy family for a year. The family also did not celebrate the first Christmas and Easter solemnly if the deceased did not have a male direct heir and the estate's fixed property was shared to the nearest male relative.

AGRICULTURE AND PROFESSIONAL WORK – p. 103

Midyat's land borders. Aynverdo and Mzizah's land areas, in the south by about five kilometers towards the east borders Midyat, with about seven kilometers towards the villages Arnas, village Bacinne (Bethgane) and Kfarshomaa, in the west with about two kilometers to the district Salih. That land area is about ten by ten kilometers, of which about five (km²) arable lands were, and still are.

The surface consists of boiling small volcanoes with 100–200 meter high mountains and flat valleys. Seventy percent mountain-pasture. The rest of the city-near land surface is arable vineyard land. The vineyards, Midyat's total surface goes to 98 % of Arameans. Turabdin place is created in the beginning. The cultivation soil is reddish, nutritious and fits all mountains and flat valleys.

The most common types of crops were wheat, barley, lentils, and chickpeas. Grapes and the traditional grains were cultivated. Among vegetables, they planted watermelon, honeydew melons, cucumbers, pumpkins, and some other fruits. There are about a dozen different varieties. The soil was suitable for potatoes and other root vegetables, but no one cultivated

them. Potatoes were not a traditional food. Eating carrots was also unpopular. People joked about those who chose carrots among all fruits.

For natural reasons, the cultivated fields were divided into plots of one, two, or three acres. One acre is the work of a pair of oxen plowing for a day. In modern measurements, this equals one hundred times thirty meters, that is, three thousand square meters. The farmer worked year-round in his fields with his entire family. Owning arable land was a status symbol and a sign that the family was stable and prosperous through generations.

In Midyat, as in the entire region, the land was cultivated with a three-year crop rotation. To jointly guard their crops, the farmers sowed simultaneously and the same seed in dozens of contiguous fields. This was partly to easily protect their crops by having one and the same guard for the entire area and partly to help each other with various tasks.

The crop rotation was conducted as follows: Year 1: The farmer plowed the land three or four times early in the spring, and in late spring, he sowed watermelon, honeydew melons, or other vegetables. In the autumn, the farmer transported the year's stored natural fertilizer and spread it in these fields. Then he sowed wheat or barley for the next year. Year 2: The farmer guarded his vital crops to harvest and then carefully dried them during the summer. In late autumn of the same year, he sowed lentils, chickpeas, and other similar beans. Year 3: The beans were harvested, and preparations were made to plow the land as done three years earlier. This cycle continued for generations. It probably has been this way since the ancestors began cultivating the region's wildlands after the drying up of the river.

To provide for the family with their own agriculture, the farmer cultivated as much arable land in different places to cover the entire food chain within the three-year rotation. Land ownership was regulated by law already in antiquity. In King Hammurabi's code, one can read about farmers' rights and the tax rules that existed. Disputes about inheritance or similar legal cases were resolved by a group of laymen in a simple manner.

Famine chased the farmer for seven years without catching up. History confirms this Aramean proverb. If the wheat harvest failed he had neither lentils nor beans to take. If both wheat and beans failed he had melons, grapes and its products to support himself with. History has not witnessed people who owned only cash.

It is known that all three cycle cultivations failed one and the same year. Therefore the farmer was more secured at difficult times than others, from 5–10 acres up to 40–50 acres. The vineyards were more evenly divided.

Arable lands were owned by about four hundred families and the land was divided. This was because families with children did not want to be dependent on buying grapes, which was a vital nourishment during the season. Midyat residents were not inclined to sell their products on the market. Grain harvests were saved for coming years in stock in case the harvest should fail. Rather one shared the fresh fruits that were left over with the neighbor or fed the animals with them, than go to the market and stand there and sell for example melons.

The farming people lived in their world as in a collective. One was dependent on cooperation to among other things exchange services and borrow tools from each other to manage the heavy work in the field. Farmers spoke a dialect that was more old-fashioned than the city people's.

In the 1960s there were in Midyat roughly counted about five hundred cattle, of which half plowing oxen and half dairy cows, 20–30 horses, 100 pack mules and about three thousand sheep and goats. The dairy animals were owned by about 150 families. Of these, 15–20 families owned more than half and the rest were divided between 3–4 up to 10–15 pieces per family.

The majority of Midyat's labor force consisted of attractive professional specialists, silk and other advanced textiles. Blacksmith, gold- and silversmith etc. were genuinely Midyat's traditional professions (see image p. 218). Some had their workshops in the central city and the rest worked nearby.

Most of the work was purchased and performed in piecework and thus one earned more money and after a day's work. The city's builders were well known and appreciated throughout the country. Many stone houses, church towers, minarets, gravestones, bridges, pavings on large parade streets and many other ancient buildings that still adorn the cityscape are built by Midyat's builders. A well-known builder from the city was Malke Brahim.

While the common builder took one lira per day Malke took five Turkish lira. Midyat's old mosque with the minaret is the builder Malke Brahim's work. The building was erected nearly a hundred years ago and stands still as it was then, without the slightest need for renovation.

POLITICS – p. 106

The word politics did not exist in the farmer's usage. Traditionally there were two parties in every community or two strong families who were in constant feud with each other about the village's dominion. These were not any registered official parties with names and political program but often groups against each other in the primitive farming communities. Village elder-muhtar was voted forward every third year in the village or district, party politics was incited at election period and often the election day ended with fights before vote counting.

In the 1950s the Turkish national newspaper Milliyet wrote that Midyat had most female muhtar per inhabitant in the entire country. Midyat's mayor between 1956 to 1960 was a woman. The widow after Nuri Aziz, Zekiye, had that post.

In the large Kurdish clan culture there were two parties; Haverka and Dakshura. But these parties were not legally registered in Turkey. On the contrary, they were officially banned. Midyat was not, and has never been, involved in the Kurdish clan fight unless one was forced to it. But a handful of city people who knew the Turkish language had economic benefits from the Kurdish clan feuds by pleading their cause with the authorities.

Midyat's people, Christians and Muslims, were traditionally not prone to fighting if one would compare them with other communities in the area. Jealousy belonged to the culture but each one wanted to do right for himself and be better than the neighbor. In that way they contributed to the economic growth in the city positively which is why the city developed quickly.

The Mahmado clan and the Nahrozo clan fought against each other about the municipality's mayor post, but the election campaign's program was written by the Aramean people and the days after the election all politics ceased and the everyday began again as it was before the election. The city's Christians always put the own group's interests in the first rank and no one can testify that the group abandoned each other or even quarreled with each other for these Kurdish clans' interests.

Bishop Afrem called this politics for pure lies and the politicians as greedy whores who deceived the poor citizen. The bishop was right. The local party politics was based on the strong's own power interest, mudslinging and lies. Muscle demonstration at the city's cafes was politics' everyday. Thank goodness this election fever lasted only 2-3 weeks every fourth year before the election and then it was forgotten.

In 1973 Ishak Shabo ran for mayor. Theoretically, he could win because the number of votes in the municipal election was approximately equal between Christians and Muslims. Fortunately there were some Muslims who wanted to see him as mayor. The power family Azizke had held the mayor post since the First World War and Ziver himself for twelve years.

Ishak's election campaign began with great enthusiasm especially among the youths. But the closer the election day came Ziver pushed the other candidates further and further out in the corner and Ishak's chances decreased. Midyat had never had such a cunning politician as Ziver Mahmado. But the longer time went, the more Ishak's election campaign began to lose speed and Ziver won power with a large margin.

He knew personally every eligible voter in the entire municipality and quickly acquired good knowledge of individuals' doings and treated these each in his way. He asked one for a vote, patted the other on the shoulder about the same thing and could take the third by force and threaten to himself his vote. He knew exactly how to win large resources. The only chance for the Arameans to take an election without fighting over power in the municipality through Ishak was shattered. The youths' grueling election campaign which lasted more than two months day and night ended with great disappointment. Ziver had nearly half of all votes. Ishak had 248 votes from Midyat and 6 pieces bought from a family in Estel. The other four candidates shared the rest.

The 1970s large changes in population structure due to emigration and immigration led to a political reshuffling within the establishment. The city had never experienced such a large demographic change in such a short time since Seyfo. Older conservative politicians with war memories were out of time and instead youths with new ideas stepped forward. Most were

benevolent and wanted the people's best, but in the shadow of these kind-hearted youths grew some groups with clan mentality.

The medallion's other side looked different, with the galloping inflation of the time and fast-growing municipal inhabitants clan representatives arrogated large benefits and became relatively rich at the people's expense. They abused the common people's resources for their own clans. Unfortunately, it took time before these greedy people were revealed. Should this continue a few years more, a model like the one families Mahmado-Nahrozo created would grow among the Christian group too. In other words, a part of Midyat's Christian population was close to creating two copies of Mahmado and Nahrozo clans with Christian names.

In the middle of the 1970s Midyat's part of the municipality had changed totally and the Yezidi group's mass emigration left a void behind. Kurds from the east countryside could buy a farm in the city for less than half the value. In a short time Midyat's socio-political image had changed to a lawless state. Businesses often went badly on the commercial street. Christian citizens withdrew. City residents were caught off guard, trial of strength between Kurdish phalanxes was completely silent, Muslims especially Nahrozo-Mahmado clans became pressed on the ongoing power changes. Midyat's Muslims who sailed with flag of convenience in all directions now began to look towards their Christian neighbors. In the middle of this confusion Mayor Ziver had regrettably and completely unprovoked shot the young Aydi, but he survived. The event swept a black cloud over the Mahmado family's good relationship with their Christian neighbors. Aydin was shot in the stomach on open street completely in his intoxication.

THE CITY'S MOST FAMOUS SONS – p. 108

Midyat's most famous Aramean personalities during different time periods and primarily during the 20th century were the following. The name list follows a chronological order and each person is mentioned once according to the career one has had and become famous for. The person may have lived his whole life with the same status or due to different circumstances fled from the city. In the list appear no religious persons since these are already mentioned in the churches' records. Here no consideration has been taken to class or clan affiliation but only name and main occupation.

The number of persons mentioned here is deliberately limited to ten during each time period to not make the name list too long. The time is also limited to the time from Seyfo until the city's population structure was destroyed and demography changed.

Hanna Ercin Sefer lived his entire active life in central Midyat as a businessman and was one of those who was most engaged in issues concerning the people, both for good and ill. We have therefore asked him to completely impartially stack up a list with time intervals over ten personalities.

This is what Hanna says:

Years after Seyfo

- Melek Barsavmo: Expert in legal issues and assistant lawyer in courts
- Isa Zette: Deputy mayor and bureau director in the population registration authority
- Abdulaziz Sefer: Assistant lawyer
- Malke Asmar: Mayor (a short period)
- Shamuno Rhawi: Clan chief
- Isa Zifker: Silversmith and hunter
- Adoka Bahdi, short time, cousin Gavvo Latte
- Hanna dbe Hana Kerimo: Strong figure, grown strong in the shadow of mother
- Sin Yade Hana
- Isa dbe Idcho-Grigo: Good man in general issues
- Saado Mance: Businessman, expert

1930s

- Ibrahim Shabo: Father of the city and modern history's most famous personality in Midyat
- Gabro Isa Zette: Hawk, clan chief and expert in political issues
- Isa Avrohum: Chairman of the diocese's highest council
- Barsaumo Kasho Malke: Businessman of high dignity
- Tuma Zerike Rhawi: Businessman and member of the diocese's highest council
- Masso: Advisory expert in authority issues, businessman and economist of statesman level
- Yusuf Circis Hirmiz: Businessman
- Illo Atto: Expert in legal issues and strong politician and one of the city's cultural personalities
- He Elo: Businessman and member of the diocese's highest council

1950s

- Aziz Dahabe: Skilled professional and with life at stake engaged in popular issues
- Ishak Shabo: Assistant lawyer in difficult issues and one of the city's political cornerstones
- Gabro Hanko: Successful businessman
- Ibrahim Sharro: A man of honor hired in dispute issues and politician of high dignity
- Isho Kasho Malke: Charismatic politician and expert in authority issues
- Aziz Abdalla Slivo: Builder and a strong personality
- Musa Mikhe: Silversmith of highest class and deputy mayor

1960s

- Skandar Attiko: One of Midyat's most famous dental technicians engaged in social issues
- Anvar Stajfan: Assistant lawyer in courts
- Jakob Kasho Malke: Merchant and one of the city's most active politicians

1970s

- Ibrahim Zerike Rhawi: Man of honor and a respected person
- Ibrahim Kuyumcu: Dental technician and deeply engaged in social issues, loved by the youth
- Melek Bisse: Powerful person of his time with political career
- Melek Kerimo: Bureau chief municipality's building issues
- Sabri Avrohum Hadodo: Building and entrepreneur and advisor in dispute issues
- Saado Charre-Sefer: Strong Midyat boy engaged in social issues
- Shabo Shakho: Heir after father Ibrahim Shabo and a respected figure
- Hanna Tahan: Capable speaker in gatherings and engaged
- Binjame Khalaf: Strong figure engaged in social issues
- Circis Celebi: Deacon and culture man in the public space
- Ircan: Famous professional. His shop was a meeting point to discuss social issues
- Gellush: Member of highest church council and chairman of Midyat's football club
- Jakob
- Kuya: The young apothecary represented the city's new generation with love and pride, engaged in social issues, respected by all.
- Edver Meloke: Young doctor, brave agitator in the public sphere and well known.
- Sleyman Jokin: Arms dealer, respected.
- Nail Saliba Aho: Young dentist and beloved person, engaged in social issues.

The list of names in the 1970s became longer than in previous periods. This was partly due to the already mentioned Gül case, which had shaken the entire establishment in the city. This popular victory had raised national morale and gave the people greater self-confidence to advance their positions. It was also partly because the population of Midyat had almost doubled during this time, and partly due to known Muslims during the period mentioned above: Aziz Mahmado, his son Nuri, his wife Zekiye, and grandson Ziver; Mehmed Sherif Nahrozo and his brother Murad; the doctor Rifat Nahrozo; Selim Hodja; Tahir Abdedalale; Cemil Hadci; Amin Mahmado; Shekho Sleymano; Abdulla Timur.

Among the gentlemen of the sixties mentioned above, there was one name that stood out significantly more than the others, and that was Gabro Isa Zette. The figure Gabro was short and slim to the waist, limped slightly, and spoke with a hoarse voice so one could barely hear what he said. Gabro always wore sunglasses, probably because his vision was not perfect either. But he was much more than just a figure. He was a person with a big heart, high ambitions, a leader with the character of a statesman.

Gabro lived side by side with all events throughout his life, living well over ninety years and was engaged in political matters throughout his life. Gabro's large balcony was the arena for many political discussions. The rural people, mostly Kurds, fought among themselves in their clans and came to Midyat to complain about each other in constant conflict. Meanwhile, Gabro was busy writing official petitions (arzu-hal-dilekce), as he served as an assistant jurist in courts where lawyers were not available. The brave Gabro engaged in large clan conflicts and political discussions with his life at stake and always emerged victorious.

His position usually either earned him enemies along the way, became a victim of his mistakes, or came into conflict with the state power, resulting in long imprisonments and disappearing from the scene at a young age. His position had armed bodyguards around him. Despite having strong personal qualities, many believed that he had many men at his disposal who wanted to sacrifice their lives for him, he did not want any guards and he moved completely freely for everyday life. He hated to live locked up, feared man, a persuasiveness that he utilized to save his life. Clan chief Gabro was a controversial figure but probably people had come in his way. He liked life, drank and partied when opportunity was given.

He was an unlikely figure but against his great deeds he got the nickname "Dada". He admitted it, but no one has seen him drunk among the public. In contrast to most called him with that name reverently. Gabro moved among the people unnoticed, always well-dressed with hat and tie, and obliquely behind him he had a male follower with an umbrella in hand over Gabro's head to protect him from raindrops and the hot summer heat during summer.

The phenomenon Gabro was wise enough in his leadership role and knew everyone in the city. Not only a common knowledge but he knew the persons' character, political views, their status in society and acted based on these qualities when he contacted these people. Gabro was respect-inspiring in his contact with the surroundings, careful not to end up in conflict unnecessarily as long as it was possible, but if the counterparty was mean he squeezed him properly.

During his entire long life there was no one who testified that someone had said a word against him. What Gabro said was the law itself. At election campaigns Gabro had close to three hundred votes in his luggage and this vote bank attracted all candidates. Gabro swam skillfully with big sharks in the big political arena. He voted rather for the candidate who was friend to the Christian group but most of all Gabro thrived with candidates who were in opposition because he wanted to influence the direction of politics.

The days before an election when it heated up properly the meetings succeeded each other with party representatives on his balcony. He was so cunning that he let everyone see whom he met, to negotiate the best conditions that existed. Behind Gabro's successes lay the great discipline that was faithful to him in all weathers, as well as wife Merame's kind-hearted hospitality. But the spider in the web in the innermost circle was his big daughter Shamso, a wise and gifted lady with the torch of victory beside her great father.

At the 1969 parliamentary election Gabro was in alliance with the Mufti family from Estel. The days before the election a large group of gentlemen came to Gabro to polish his campaign's final spurt. Surrounded by a swarm of party bigwigs Gabro went to the city center, surrounded by finely dressed gentlemen like in a parade on the main street. After tea drinking on the large balcony he saw a joy rush and in this rush heat he ran towards the company and shouted: "Gabro, Agha... Gabro, Agha..."

"Hello, Bahhe. How are you?" says Gabro. "Thanks uncle! Thanks a lot, we go around and recruit votes." "Oh then, Bahhe, how clever of you, thanks!" — "Don't be worried my lord,

we will rake home the election." "No then, nothing special, but to your joy uncle, I have many relatives in Qamishli whom I promise to let all vote for your candidate." A curious Gabro asks if something had happened that he himself had not heard. Gabro gets a laughing fit about Bahhe's joyful surprise, takes him under the arm, thanks him and tells him that Qamishli belongs to Syria. But Bahhe does not give up. — "So what Syria! Vote is vote, my lord." "Okay, Bahhe, thanks anyway. Come along so we will treat everyone to a tea-party over there at the cafeteria."

Parliamentary candidate lawyer Talat Oguz walks close to Gabro so he sees Gabro's laughing fit towards the galloping happy man but does not disturb the conversation. He becomes however curious and asks Gabro why he laughed so loud. Gabro did not want to tell about Bahhe's simplicity in Bahhe's presence and answers that he would tell a little later. Gabro did not want to degrade poor Bahhe in front of so many people.

Talat becomes even more curious and at the cafeteria with dozens of others present around the table he asks once more why Gabro laughed so loud. Gabro looked around and when he saw that Bahhe was not there he told in silence about Bahhe's many votes on the other side of the border. Talat got in turn a hysterical laughing fit so his tea cup flew at some who sat opposite without everyone wondering what Gabro had said to Talat. This laughing fit became a topic that recurred throughout the election campaign. To Bahhe's joy Gabro's candidate won without votes from Qamishli.

Midyat's eventful socio-political life around the 1960s was a chapter with a gold edge in the city's history. The events affected the city people's view of life and even today nostalgia lives. During the same period when the multi-party system spread in the country some gentlemen with new ideas stepped forward on the political arena. Most of the gentlemen are found in the name list above from the 1970s and got the nickname "bizimkiler", that is "ours". Among these, İbrahim Kuyumcu was a driving force in social issues. He was loved and respected by many in the city and acted based on his good will for the Aramean ethnic group's interests in all issues. The meeting place for the group "bizimkiler" was often Yakub Ercan's shoe shop. Yakub was a shining figure within the group and stood up wholeheartedly. In modern terms, one can call this group Midyat's "civil defense" (see image p. 22).

Uncle Yahko Mance. Yahko was not the one to make a fuss about himself. Yahko spoke a little stuttering and was an honorable person of the city's honored sons. Yahko was literate and had poor health, but he was a person who pushed forward in the shadow of great conflicts.

In the 1950s he owned a grocery store in the middle of the large commercial street. One beautiful day a female customer pushes forward in the store while Yahko was busy with another customer. The woman stood first on the side, but as soon as the customer left the shop she came forward, put two coins in Yahko's hand and pointed to a package of loose tobacco right next to it. Yahko put first the coins in the box and then he took the tobacco package. But "wait," he said.

"You gave me two 2.5-coins (piastre)."

"No, I gave you a 25-coin and a 2.5-coin, I had even money, that was all I had received from my master." Both coins had the same size, but the 2.5-coins were hollow and to notice the difference one should look at them or feel with one's fingers. The current tobacco package cost 27.5 piastre.

Yahko was sure that the woman had two coins and both had holes. But the woman was even more sure that she had one of each, one with hole in and one without hole. Yahko opened the box, checked, but it was impossible to prove or disprove anything. There was a whole compartment with coins, but "no," he said to the woman, "you had both with holes," and slammed the box shut.

"Stop, woman! I felt the coins on each other and both sides were hollow."

"No, I swear by God that I had only one with hole," answered the woman.

"Stop lying, you had both holes. No, you got only one hole from me, no, I swear I got only one hole."

"No, two holes, you got only one hole."

"I felt both holes with my fingers." And the quarrel went on... A verbal brawl started in the shop between the couple properly. "You didn't feel the holes," the couple argued about how many holes it was about.

At the same time as the discussion flared up, the congregation pastor passes by, hears what is said and notices the discord. He stops. The whole conversation is about...

It was quite strange for the pastor that Yahko spoke with such uncultured language to an older woman. "Stop!" shouted the pastor at the door. "Oh, sorry, Father, we are discussing coin money that we disagree about," said Yahko. "Yes, I heard what you were discussing, but there is more polite language to use. What do you mean by 'my hole, your hole, both holes'?" asked the pastor. "Sorry again, Father, I was a bit upset," said Yahko. While the pastor and Yahko tried to agree on more polite language, the woman left the shop to divert attention. "You, Yahko! Even if the lady did not have the right coins, you do not treat a woman like that," said the pastor. "No, Father, I did not mean anything bad," said Yahko. The kind-hearted Yahko ran out onto the street, gave the package to the woman, and sent greetings to her master. The quarrel was thus over, and the pastor continued home, and everyone was satisfied.

STORIES FROM THE CITY – p. 114

Lost 5-piastre Coin Ruined the Entrance to the House

Malke Shamosho was one of the richest men in the city. One day, when he was going to his office, he dropped some small coins he had in his hand at the main entrance to the yard. Malke stopped and picked up the coins he could see, but a five-piastre coin had fallen far

down into a crack between two threshold stones. He tried to pick it up but could not get it out. Malke continued to his job, and upon returning in the afternoon, he brought a construction worker home. Upon arrival, he explained his matter. The builder was surprised and asked Malke if he really was going to work so hard to dig up a five-piastre coin. "Yes, you will do that," said Malke, pointing to the spot. "But, sir, do you know how much work it will be to lift the entire threshold and mortar it back?" "Yes, I am aware of that, but this has nothing to do with the matter. Just do your job! And when you finish the job, you can come to my office to collect your fee."

The stone builder got started, rebuilt the entire threshold again. He lifted the stones, took up the five-piastre coin, and with hesitant steps, he went to Uncle Malke's office with the small five-piastre coin in his hand. "Well, are you done with your job?" asked Malke.

"Here is the five-piastre coin", answered the man and put the coin on the table in front of Malke. "Yes, sir, how much did you want?" A little hesitant he answered. "I thank you!" said Malke, took out his wallet and asked how much the stonemason wanted. "Four ten lira for my day's work, and this took half a day." Malke gave him twenty lira, a "mecidi". The man asked Malke surprised before he was to go out: "Sir, I don't get the logic in this. You are an experienced and old 'money man', why should I get four times the value of the dug-up coin, do you have any sensible explanation?" "Yes, my friend, I have a good explanation. Every time I would pass the place I would think about that little coin that I lost there and why I couldn't pick it up. Isn't it better to pay once and avoid thinking about the matter every morning and evening?"

Bone Piece in Throat Ruins Wedding Party

Gello Grigo's daughter Nadjme from Midyat had become engaged to Kawme from the village of Bethsorino. To marry off one's daughter from the city to the village did not belong to commonalities, but it occurred sometimes. Traditionally, during the period that the girl was engaged, the boy's family would come to the bride's family at holidays with different presents.

Quite a long time had passed, and the boy's family wanted to marry in their son for Christmas. But Gello was a little grumpy and wanted to wait until spring considering the distance between Midyat and Bsorino and the cold season. The boy's family had no choice and decided to wait until Uncle Gello made his decision.

Quite unexpectedly the girl's Christmas present became a dispute issue between the future related families. Gello wanted a lamb as both Christmas and New Year present, and the boy's father wanted to come to the Christmas celebration with a turkey or two chickens. With the priest's presence, the families negotiated how to meet Gello's demands.

Lamb? How big would it be in that case? Turkey? No. Laying hens during this season? No thanks! Two laying hens? No, hens and hens, how shall we get that? A difficult negotiation

between the parties led to some compromise and Gello saved a large piece of the meat for New Year's Eve dinner.

Gello was so satisfied that he immediately slaughtered the lamb the day before Christmas and held fast to his demands. The boy's family finally felt forced to go and fetch a lamb all the way from Bsorino to Midyat and did not want to back down. The Christmas table was enriched with completely fresh lamb meat. The housewife had however cooked a large pot of bulgur. New Year's Eve the housewife boiled the meat and cooked a large stew. The family, unsuspecting, began to gobble up the food with great appetite. Uncle Gello turned aside and began to cough slightly at the dining table. But this was a little strange cough. "It's no danger, just drink a little water and you will swallow down the food," said people around the dining table.

But it began to look a little dangerous, really dangerous. Gello stopped breathing, speech ability disappeared and his eyes stared straight up at the ceiling. The whole family gathered around the father and in panic one began to thump him on the back while another fetched water, all so that he would cough out the food or swallow the bite that got stuck in the throat. The wife screamed loudly and asked what had got stuck in the throat. "It must be a smaller bone from the lamb's foot." "That's correct, grandma," answered one of the grandchildren. "Grandpa has the rest of the lamb's bone in his hand." "Wait, wait!", shouted the wife. "I know how to get the meat bone out of his throat."

The wife quickly fetched the household's plumbing snake and opened properly the husband's mouth in front of the kerosene lamp and carefully pushed the bone piece down the throat until the poor wretch lay completely still. "What are you doing, mom?", screamed the son, "my dad is being strangled to death!" He turned his dad and began thumping powerfully on his back to cough out the bone piece. "But hit on, more, more." No, he does not react. "Give him more water so he swallows down the damned bone piece!" No, all resuscitation attempts were in vain.

Panic arose in the middle of supper, the children ran out into the yard and called for help but it was too late. The wife had already pushed down the bone piece until it got stuck properly in the windpipe and thereby took the life of Uncle Gello. The entire New Year's joy was transformed into sorrow. The priest with the entire neighborhood and family gathered and each one had his explanation for the evening's tragedy. But the explanation that the priest had surpassed everyone's and it went out on that it was Gello's sins about forcing the future relative family to have the lamb that was the cause. Should it be turkey then Gello would survive because the turkey's bones were narrower and would not get stuck in the throat. Gello was buried the day after and the family from Besorino got their severe sorrow but with a little guilt feelings.

Kills his Father for his Love

Ablahad Maro fell in love with one of Midyat's most beautiful girls. To be in love with a young and beautiful girl is all youths' wish, but one should have a little reality perspective. A beautiful girl from a rich and large family would entail great sacrifices.

After many turns about how this would happen the father was forced to reluctantly accept young Ablahad's wish. According to tradition, it should first be engagement with all what it meant, and after a few months it was time to plan for dowry and wedding. One could not agree on how the whole thing would be financed and when the wedding would take place. This led to discord between the families and a bitter battle was started. The father and the adult sons stood united on one side and the stubborn Ablahad with his strong love on the other side. The family came out of step with each other. What was to be the beginning of a new family relationship turned into a conflict within the family, often with scuffles. Finally, the father persuaded his son Ablahad to forget the girl with the promise to find a better suited girl for him.

Ablahad turned into a sad and more withdrawn guy, he became depressed and did not want contact with anyone all winter half-year. The family comforted him by showing him girls within the family who would suit him and the family better, but he refused. On the contrary, he considered that it was the father who caused this misfortune for him and planned something stupid against his father. Plans that were so devilish that the community Midyat had never experienced in its history.

A chilly February day Ablahad says to his father that he had bought a lot of illegal goods from some foreign persons and they had made an appointment in the family's vineyards a bit outside the community. A little hesitantly the father asked his son about the matter and Ablahad explained seriously about his business and about how much the family would earn from it. A little thoughtful the father prepared the family's sons mules and the duo set off towards the forest.

Ablahad had planned in small details alone how and where he would realize his plans. He had acquired a revolver before and went out and tested it in the forest. The weapon worked without problem. On the way to the vineyard the father sat on the son's donkey's back and Ablahad walked behind him with a small food bag hanging on the shoulder. At the bottom of his food bag he had his revolver carefully wrapped in a piece of cloth. Ablahad carefully put his hand in the bag and checked if the revolver was ready to fire. He trembled a little and felt the hatred against the father within him. He carefully opened his hand in the bag and checked the weapon, prepared for what he would do as soon as they arrived.

Creation's first murder was committed with allusion to Abraham who wanted to sacrifice his son Isaac to Jehovah. Imagine if it went like Cain who killed his only brother Abel. What Ablahad had planned and intended to execute today was not simpler. Or did he compare God would reveal himself to Ablahad with a lamb under the arm, or the almighty would come to the vineyard with the girl whom Ablahad was in love with. It was just fantasies spinning in his head, but there was nothing either stopping him, Ablahad had planned all winter half-year

and the hatred against the father had grown within him. He was determined to complete his evil plan.

On the way there they were met by a group of travelers. The father explained to them that they were going to the village of Anhil to buy animal feed. One of the travelers wondered if it wasn't a little too late to travel all the way to the village this late in the afternoon. The desire for revenge had blocked all his thoughts. He had... and a journey towards the forest this late and wintertime was a little strange. "No, we shall stay overnight there", answered Ablahad quickly.

The journey continued and Ablahad whipped now and then the donkey to go faster. In the wide country no people were seen in motion. The father asked several times about who they were who would sell the goods and when they would get paid. Ablahad answered shortly with trembling voice but enough to convince the father that it really was a good deal.

It was gray and chilly, a thin layer of snow had fallen during the previous night. According to Ablahad the deal concerned a lot of tobacco that Ablahad would buy from some Kurds from the village of Kfarshoma at a good price, which one could sell at double the price since tobacco in the middle of winter was a shortage commodity. It was punishable to deal with so much tobacco and therefore one must take it in through the community under the protection of darkness. One planned the handover for late afternoon to come home in the evening.

Late in the afternoon they arrived at the vineyard. Ablahad whipped the donkey towards the small stone hut up on the mountain where the men would wait. But there was no sign of the sellers. Neither any human tracks through the snow-covered landscape. The father turned to Ablahad and asked loudly where the sellers were. "Well, dad, the tobacco is there in two sacks inside the hut and the men are either inside hiding or are somewhere around here," answered Ablahad. "But wait," he continued, "I will first climb up on the roof of the hut and from there I will scout a little for possible thieves hiding behind bushes. Then you get the go-ahead from me to go in and fetch the sacks."

Ablahad picked up the revolver in secret, handed over the food bag to the father and climbed up on the roof of the hut. He turned a couple of laps around to fool the dad that he checked if there were any enemies moving nearby and then said: "The coast is clear, dad, you can go in and fetch the sacks." Hesitantly the father went carefully into the hut. It was dark but still light enough to see what was inside the hut.

"You damned boy, you have been fooled, there is nothing here," screamed the father. The entrance to the hut was quite low and one must bend properly to walk. The father held his hands on each side of the entrance, bent a little and came out completely disappointed. Ablahad bent over the entrance with his ready-to-fire revolver and in madness courage shot. It banged properly with a chain of echoes in the snow-covered landscape and the bullet bored into the father's neck. Bleeding heavily he held his wound with one hand and attacked the son with stones with the other hand. Just during this hectic commotion Ablahad jumped down confused and ran away from his father. After about ten meters the dad caught up with the son

and father and son began to wrestle like two bears until the dad fell down on the ground from fatigue and great blood loss.

Completely cold-bloodedly Ablahad washed off the bloodstains with snow and rode on the snow all the way to the community's outskirts. From there he went to an acquaintance and confessed everything he had done. There was no one who wanted to give him protection, neither to hide nor to help him flee abroad. He was finally forced to surrender to the Turkish legal apparatus. Ablahad was sentenced to a long prison term and after a time he jumped from the prison's window on the fourth floor and later died of his injuries.

The Moon's Gates are Closed

Priest Abdalla, later archpriest, was one of Midyat's genuine cultural figures without equal. He was the son of one of the city's most influential families and a leader figure who took the first place in the city's all popular issues.

In 1969 the Americans landed on the moon. The news reached Midyat last of all. The Christian group felt a little more valuable than the Muslims, because those who could succeed with this completely incredible deed, that is to fly all the way up to the moon, were precisely Christians. It is only the Christians who plan all modern technology, one used to hear here and there.

The moon, which according to Islam is a holy creation of God, but in state media a heated debate was started between those who embraced the thought that man climbed the moon and between those who did not believe it. Priest Abdalla and some men had gathered in a premise and the discussion about the hot moon came up by itself. An officer with high rank happened to be there and became curious about the debate why he asked the present to speak in Turkish so he could keep up. Suddenly he and Father Abdalla ended up in the center of the discussion; the officer on the yes-side and the dear priest father on the no-side. The officer tried to convince the priest that the entire Western world's media cannot lie by showing in detail pictures from the moon's surface and otherwise writing minute by minute how it all happened. Why would they do that? I believe one hundred percent that man has landed on the moon, tried the officer to say.

The priest had his explanation and according to him it had its basis in the Bible. According to biblical revelations the moon lacks doors and without an entrance door one could not go in, claimed the priest. Furthermore he quoted some verses from the Old Testament. The priest put himself in a sticky situation he could not pull himself out of. The longer the conversation lingered the more of those present agreed with the officer. But however one tried to persuade the priest to change opinion one did not succeed and finally he was alone in that it was impossible to land on the moon. The priest father was wise but this was not his subject, or it was bigger than his capacity.

The Donkey that Climbs up on the Roof

In 1968 a dog with the disease rabies came to the areas around Midyat. The dog had threatened a shepherd in the forest but the shepherd scared away the dog with his staff before he attacked him and the sheep. The day after a news spread in the area that a schoolboy was attacked by the same dog but the boy managed without physical injuries.

The Shabo Bahdo family had their donkey tied on the lawn behind the house. A passing Midyat resident had noticed that the donkey kicked at a dog that wanted to bite him. To save the donkey the man chased the sick dog with stones and quick as a weasel the dog disappeared towards the mountains. Upon closer inspection on the donkey one discovered that he had been scratched by the dog. The family treated the wound with a little rat poison to avoid infections but not more than that. A couple of days later the donkey began to behave a little strange.

Touma tied the donkey in the yard and asked the family to keep the animal under supervision because he had heard that a sick dog went loose around and it could be the one that scratched the donkey. "It is a dangerous and contagious disease, one should be careful of," warned Touma the family. Towards the afternoon the donkey began to kick around without reason and bit itself in the front legs. The landlady noticed that the donkey began to behave stupidly in the yard. "It can bite the children running in the yard," she thought and considered taking it into the stable until the husband comes home in the evening.

The wife held a strong stick in her hand, loaded up the donkey and whipped it towards the stable. But completely crazily the donkey began to scream loudly and madly, and began to climb up the stairs towards the roof. "Jesus Mary!", she screamed shocked over what played out before her eyes, and to be able to speak further she made at least two times the sign of the cross in front of her.

Panic-stricken she shouted to the children to go out and call for help. She had never seen or heard of a donkey climbing up stairs. This may be nature's most rare miracle. There is an Aramean proverb that reads: "In Damascus donkeys climb up the ladder", when one hears something that cannot happen. But this is a mythical sentence used only in cultural parlance.

One of the children ran to the neighbors and called for help, but it was far too late. The donkey had already climbed up like a cat on the 4–5 meter high roof and completely violently kicking to right and left it fell behind the house on the hard rock cliff headfirst and lay there lifeless. The entire neighborhood gathered there, surprised at what they saw in front of them. Touma came home and was horrified over the kind donkey that the family had for so many years and how the poor animal actually committed suicide. Touma reported the event to the police and from now on it was a health issue for the municipality.

Prosecutor, the hospital and the infectious disease control authority became engaged in the matter. The municipality sent a group of veterinarians with some poisonous meat and searched for the dog to find it and then put it down, but without succeeding. In the evening a municipal official went out on the streets and shouted loudly to warn the inhabitants about the loose dog. During the 1950s a similar rabid dog had bitten the young Chalma dba Chalma

and he had died a short time thereafter, but now so many years had passed and the event was forgotten. People in general thought that this was ridiculous and no one put so much weight on it. "Loose dog? Just kick down the bastard."

The day after, early in the morning, Binno was on his way to his job behind the city's mosque. Suddenly he saw a shaking dog a few meters away by the mosque. The dog behaved a little strangely. He trembled and the body shook. First Binno ignored the animal completely, but the closer to the dog he came the more hesitant he became about the dog's behavior. The dog stood up on its legs and shook back and forth with saliva running from the mouth. His bright red eyes scared Binno even more so that Binno stopped and regarded the dog a few seconds. "Damn how disgusting," he mumbled. "It must be this dog that bit the neighbor's donkey yesterday."

But Binno was in a hurry to his job and thought that he would notify the municipal workers who dealt with street maintenance if he saw any. Binno continued in fast pace forward and with the corner of the eye he saw how the dog flew at him from the side with the big jaw wide open. Binno tried to kick back the dog with all his power but did not succeed in fending off the dog bastard. The first bite took Binno on the clothes and he succeeded in stifling the dog's neck under the arm. The coarse-grown Binno held the dog, like in the Gilgamesh statue with the lion cub under the arm, and choked the dog to death. He got however a little abrasion in the same arm that held the dog. People ran to help, but from the time Binno grabbed the dog under the arm until the dog took its last breaths; it took only a few seconds. Binno was driven to the hospital immediately and everyone thanked him for his effort to save the community from the dangerous creature.

Gabro Assaults Police and Prosecutor, Goes Unpunished

Gabro dbe Himme lived in the Saido district on the main street that led west. An autumn day in 1969 he sat in his yard guarding his meat animals. Suddenly he heard some passing men on the street speaking a little frantically in Kurdish. At the height of the main entrance to the yard one of the men stopped and without asking he stepped into the yard and asked Gabro to get a little water to drink. Gabro shouted in to the children to come out with a bowl of water. It was common that passing travelers asked to get a little water to drink during their long wanderings, and it was considered a good deed to give a bowl of cold water to a stranger.

While the children came out with water one of the men exchanged a few friendly words with Gabro, and he answered equally friendly. The man thanked for the good deed and continued his way. The wife Rume had observed the man and his mysterious movements from the window on the upper floor and asked her husband if he knew who these men were. "They are from the villages in the west, but I didn't recognize them, why do you ask?" he said to his wife. "His look was frightening actually. He came in to drink water but he checked around the entire yard and went forward to see the stable entrance, I suspect," answered the wife. "Oh well, and you became afraid?" "Not directly afraid, but you never know. Did you not hear how the thieves cleaned out Uncle Malke's stable the other day?" "Yes, thieves exist everywhere. Especially during this season, but don't be afraid woman as long as I am home."

Don't you see that I sleep right over the stable entrance, awake almost all night?" "Yes then, you are not awake to guard the sheep but you get up several times to smoke. Imagine if the thieves strike when you sleep deeply." "Then YOU wake up! But wake me before you kill the men." "God be gracious to the thieves my terrifying old man, they will shit themselves when they see you," she said equally jokingly.

Gabro was tall and thin as a skeleton in a children's fairy tale and walked bent forward, limping with a quite peculiar strange walk. No, Gabro was not at all the nasty type that Rume joked about. He was by nature skew, bone-muscle figure, nearsighted and had thick large glasses to not look at the human he met in alleys.

The man who asked for water was Iskan; a notorious bandit who had a few lives on his conscience and a solid criminal record like murder, robbery and extortion all the way down to chicken theft like theft of eggs from a poor farmer. This man was a tough rider with a fine face outwardly. By day he was a believing Muslim, felt among mosque dignitaries, and by night he was the worst crook who bore lawlessness and spread terror in the area. Iskan had served a long prison sentence and had been conditionally released a few days earlier, just in time for the autumn edge. This day he was on his way to a like-minded person in Midyat on an obviously illegal errand, and at night stolen sheep would be a perfect prey.

In the evening this day Iskan passed the time with his friends at a cafeteria in central Midyat until closing time. Thereafter he and his thief buddies took a round in the Saido district calmly while they explored the Gabro family, and moreover how they would take the loot out of the community in a smooth way.

The clock is a bit past midnight and the trio goes to action with their plans. Plan one was to open the outer door towards the street and take out all the sheep and herd them slowly on the street out of the community as if it were their own sheep. But the outer door was locked with a powerful padlock and now it was just to redo the plan.

Iskan shall step over the three-meter high wall into the yard and from there he shall go into the stable and take out the sheep one by one on his back to an accomplice who shall sit on the wall towards the street so that he in turn shall lower the sheep down to the third man on the street. The goal was to take at least four sheep with them; two for Iskan, who was completely broke, and one for the accomplices each.

The trio had a live revolver with them to shoot themselves free at possible discovery, and he who sits on the wall shall carry the weapon because from his place he has oversight over both the street and the yard. "First a warning shot, and if it doesn't help, shoot to kill fast without thinking", says Iskan to his accomplices and continues, "Gabro is completely unpredictable, a five-cent Christian and moreover handicapped and blind. You saw him yourselves." "Yes, I know who he is." "No; we shall never dare to come in the skull of a handicapped," finished Iskan the discussion. "It is an easy match for us. I shoot him straight through if he dares show himself. I believe moreover that he won't even be afraid of a praying Christian, moreover the old man is handicapped," answers the other.

Iskan goes down to the stable, which is a cave straight under the house. The entrance to the stable lies under one window where Gabro sleeps. Iskan hears a healthy snoring but cannot determine if it is Gabro or someone else in the family. It has, by the way, no importance. The man holding the revolver in his hand sees clearly the entire yard and the entrance door to the house and is ready to shoot at the slightest unexpected movement to save the everyday respected Iskan. After a short while Iskan comes out to the yard with a thick and heavy object on the shoulder and stretches the object over to the man on the wall with the live weapon.

At the same moment Rume wakes from a nightmare that the thieves are cleaning out the animal stable. "God! This is not a dream," she mumbles to herself, and without delaying she kicks her husband to wake him. "Jesus Mary," says Gabro completely paralyzed. "No, quiet now old man, do you see the thieves in the yard?" says Rume hysterically. "No, what thieves, you scared the life out of me woman."

Rume tries completely quietly to turn Gabro towards the window and shows him the thieves. Gabro does not see the men clearly but he understands quickly the entire operation and advises the wife to be quiet. Without wasting time he lifts up the wooden lid to the stable entrance from inside and steps down completely quietly. Down there he tries to orient himself in the compact darkness. Gabro stands completely quietly beside the entrance to the stable and waits for the thief who carries out his meat animals. Iskan left other objects to his buddies and thunders quickly down the stable.

Gabro didn't have time to grasp what he was getting into and has only one thing in his thoughts that he must not let go, and that is to save the sheep even with life at stake. Suddenly a male figure lands in his arms. "You devil evil thief," he screams and throws himself on him. Gabro takes a proper grip on the thief's waist with hands clamped and pushes him far inside the stable. He stumbles forward to the tumult and ends up straight on top of the thief in missionary position.

Rume becomes panic-stricken that the thief is surely armed and that he will kill the husband to free himself. She turns on all the house's lights and screams towards the street as loud as she can. The gunman shoots two warning shots from the wall and waits for Iskan to come out soon. But it did not turn out as they had planned. Iskan is caught in Gabro's violence. Not only caught but Gabro had already ruffled him properly. As soon as he moves Gabro hits him with claws and beaks. Within the course of two-three minutes the entire neighborhood wakes up and comes rushing to the family's help. A policeman, who by chance was nearby, arrives at the scene quite fast with the whistle as alarm and the urging "Dur, dur, in place, stand still" (stop, stop, don't move, it is police). The whole thing was revealed in public and Iskan sat cornered with hands tied behind back, well ruffled by Gabro in a slimy manure sea. Gabro had in every way squeezed the juice out of Iskan but externally he had no visible bleeding wounds except that Gabro had bitten him in the ear and around the neck with his nicotine-damaged tooth roots to calm him down.

The other thieves had made it out to the street, retreated to the stable and Iskan was lifted up into the police car with further transport to detention. People left the place, but there was no one who knew the thief's identity.

The police in the city of Urhoy had two days earlier seized an Aramean man named Suleyman in his truck with a whole 127 military weapons. The recipient in the area could have been just this man Iskan. The civil police in Midyat had scouted on him the same evening in the central city until he disappeared shortly before midnight, but the night's serving police were aware of the scouting.

The police treated Iskan like a common thief, which was not so strange, and kept him on the staircase to the police station. It began to be daylight and people began, as usual, to stream in to the square outside the police house. Some recognized the bandit Iskan and when the police urged people to go away there was on the contrary more pressure at the police station's entrance door. The police moved Iskan with hands tied behind his back to the bottom step on the station's ground level immediately by the square and urged people that he who wants can stand in line and come forward and spit on the thief in the face, but no physical injuries, that is, no assault. This type of humiliation did not belong to commonalities but there were many who had bitter experiences of exactly Iskan. The idea to humiliate him must have come from people within the police force.

A dozen Midyat residents came forward and spat on the thief and one or another strange Kurd who was there and knew of him were not late to stand in line. Ibrahim Maro had bitter memories of this thief because he had several times cleaned out Ibrahim's grape vines. As soon as Ibrahim heard the event he came rushing to the station. He came a little late so he didn't hear the police's urging. When Ibrahim saw the thief he spat a proper gob, dealt him a slap in the face and said: "How do my grapes taste, you damned thief?" Screamed police to Ibrahim and turned towards him and dealt him a powerful slap. "This is starting to be too much," said the police, seized Ibrahim and pushed him out onto the street.

The interrogator got information about the case and when he identified the criminal he put him in arrest and the police wanted to hear the one who had seized him in his stable. At first he didn't believe that the story was true. Iskan was put in a secure stone quarry prison. The police went in their jeep from Midyat's police station. He had already gone to his job two kilometers north of the city in the stable. Police went there immediately and fetched him reluctantly to Midyat... To fetch Gabro. And Gabro was not home.

Gabro arrived with patched and dusty clothes, completely unkempt, and at first glance the police never believed that Gabro would have seized the thief. The police suspected that this story was cultivated to hide a larger crime. "Why would this Christian poor man be involved?" he thought, and therefore he called for the prosecutor to together sort it out.

The police began to interrogate Gabro in the prosecutor's presence more thoroughly. Gabro answered as best he could with his cackling Turkish, but he also got help from the guard Amse as interpreter. However the police tried to turn the interrogation questions upside down

they could not get anything that indicated that it was someone else who overpowered Iskan, and they did not want to believe that it was Gabro who stood behind this heroic effort.

Finally, the interrogator stood by the table and asked Gabro if he could reconstruct the event there in the interrogation room. "Listen, you Gabro efendi! We assume that it was you who overpowered the thief. Assume now that I am the thief, the room we are in is the stable and you are you. How did you seize Iskan?" Gabro understood nothing. The guard Amse came forward and explained to Gabro in Aramean what the police meant. Gabro was seized by a big laugh. "Shall I seize mister policeman as I did with the thief?" he asked. "Yes exactly, show here and now how you did," explained the guard. "Do I not dirty his clothes with mine?" asked Gabro. "No, this belongs to their job," answered the guard. "Shall I do exactly as I did when I seized the thief?" "Yes," answered the interrogator through the interpreter.

Gabro scratched himself with the right hand just behind his right ear and said: "Now, damn, in thirty seconds I, Gabro dbe Himme, become Midyat's modern history's most historical person by giving a feared Turkish policeman a proper round in front of a feared Turkish prosecutor without getting behind bars at least ten years." "So, do you mean in full seriousness that I.....?" And before even Gabro was finished with his question, the interrogator screamed: "YES... We mean serious..."

"Blame yourselves, you bastards," thought Gabro and took a proper run-up. Like a lion he followed the man wildly. He grabbed the policeman by the waist and threw him with all his power forward, exactly as he did with the thief in the stable. They fell headlong, both the policeman and Gabro, on the desk and then they ended up on the other side of the table straight in the arms of the prosecutor. The typewriter, with the glasses and everything that was on the table, ended up on the floor. The prosecutor ended up on his back stuck under the table with smashed heavy typewriter on the chest and the whole room was transformed into a theater of war in seconds. Gabro got the policeman suddenly in his arms lying under him on the floor. He began to deal the policeman a rain of slaps. Not enough with what he caused and began letting Gabro continue with the "reconstruction" by opening his jaw and biting the policeman in the ear as in the original. "Heeelp!", shouted the policeman loudly in panic anxiety. "Stop, stop!", screamed the prosecutor pressed under all debris. "You damned horseman, you have crushed us." "Which idiot has called this wooden plank here?", roared the prosecutor at the others in the room.

The guards ran in fast, helped their bosses up and corrected a little here and there in the room, but the typewriter was broken and thus also the interrogation interrupted. Gabro practiced his disproportionate offensive on a finely dressed prosecutor and a policeman and stood there in the shame corner, but proud because his historical deed was completed, and expected a proper lecture in upbringing knowledge. The interrogation ended with the prosecutor scolding the policeman instead and Gabro got a powerful push out of the house. "Nature's odd creation and damned savage, he crushed my ribs," mumbled the policeman to himself. Gabro turned around and asked if he could go back to his job. "Out!" roared the policeman, "out with you, you damned, I don't want to see you more!" "What cowards, it was they who wanted it and

now they are angry at me," mumbled Gabro to himself and continued further out. Iskan got his prison sentence and Gabro became the decade's folk hero in Midyat.

Sillo exists but he does not exist

Sillo dba Zahrabaje lived in the southern district near the little splash pond that one called "the lake/rawmo". The children who lived nearby could swim, but in the area there were no large lakes with that designation. The largest water collection was the Midyat lake, and in its best season it was approximately 100 by 200 meters and two to three meters deep. Towards the middle of the summer it began to evaporate completely dry. Sillo could swim, but not only swim a distance but he could swim long moments and dive in difficult-to-access places. Sillo was one of Midyat's best wrestlers too. These qualities came to great use for him, but we start with a simple fight.

He was a broad-shouldered, powerfully built gentleman and weighed a good bit over a hundred kilos. He had deserted from military service with a few months left of the service. This was a serious crime and could give a long prison sentence. But Sillo kept mostly indoors in Vavsto. One day he fought with a stranger on the street and in the heat of the tumult Sillo used excessive violence by sitting on the other man's chest. People ran to rescue, but to everyone's surprise the man stopped breathing. While the crowd tried to revive the man Sillo ran home and hid on the roof under a straw pile. The police arrived at the scene and asked immediately about the perpetrator. The victim had woken to life and told the police about the attacker. Furthermore he went with the police to start the hunt for Sillo.

Police knocked on the family's door and the wife's stressed action revealed that the husband was hidden somewhere in the home. The hunt intensified in all directions and edges and when Sillo was close to being seized he jumped from the roof behind the house and ran aimlessly out into the community. A policeman, a guard and a whole army of curious took up the chase on him in the narrow streets.

The police shouted at him: "Stop or I shoot", but the guard said to the police that the chased Sillo could not speak Turkish. Now it was the guard's turn to scream in the own language and urged Sillo to stop otherwise he gets shot. Neither this helped. But when Sillo could not run anymore and realized that he could not escape he ended his marathon in a yard where the whole family sat and chatted. Everyone in the house rose in panic to help the chased uncle. Sillo explained fast why he is chased but it was not that which was so important but he wanted to hide with the family. "I will throw myself in the well and cling there invisible but don't forget to take me up when the police left the yard," he said. "No, the well is very deep, you will drown, Sillo," said the man and tried to prevent him. "No, let me do it," begged Sillo, and threw off his outer clothes.

At the same moment the policeman pushed the outer door and warned Sillo with drawn weapon to give up. Quite incredibly Sillo threw himself into the dark, cold and water-filled lagoon. "God!", exclaimed the policeman completely paralyzed, "this man cannot be wise. He must have had great worries because he wanted to commit suicide." The policeman

approached the well and checked carefully but it was true, the powerful man whom he chased for a trivial matter threw himself completely in evil in the frightening water reservoir. No witnesses were needed. The policeman himself, the guard and about thirty others became witnesses to the event. The policeman sat there surprised and waited for a quick rescue effort with great commotion but to his surprise there was no one who acted, not even the guard who stood beside him moved to save Sillo.

"Nothing," mumbled the policeman to himself when he went away. "I get it," he said and went back to the station where wide-eyed he told his boss about what he had been through. "It is not our worry if people commit suicide, ignore it," commanded the boss.

Sillo was saved up out of the well and kept away from the police a few days until everything was forgotten. It still was not possible to hide how long as ever, and therefore Sillo asked in silence the district's Muhtar Illo Atto how one could sort out the situation. "There are no more choices," said Illo to him. "Either you surrender yourself to the judicial authority or you shall keep hidden. But currently you are declared dead at the local police." "How so, I am alive." "Yes, I know that you are alive, Sillo, but you shocked the entire police force here in the city when you threw yourself in the well. You are officially missing until you are either physically seized or the family applies for death declaration, but there is problem. What happens to your inheritance?" "Oh, this was not good." Illo advised him to keep away until further notice, at least until the end of the coming winter half-year. "You never know what will happen, there can be a general amnesty." That last part was a little comforting. Sillo thanked and went home to the loom a little worried.

In the spring when the "lake" was chock-full two military police came riding to the city's outskirts. They had ridden long ways in the heat so the animals were thirsty. They trampled forward hastily to drink water. At the steep edge on the south side one of the horses fell headlong down into the water and the man on the horse's back was thrown in front of the horse in the deep dirty water and sank down into the depths. He got stuck in the thick and hard bottom clay. The horse made it up. The shocked comrade tried to alert the surroundings by screaming starting a rescue action like no other, and the work to take up the body went on until midnight without result.

Early in the morning the day after the effort continued with aids, but not even with this could one find the body. One asked if there was any diver who could help them. Resigned and disappointed the responsible turned to the civilians who stood on site. The heavy and panic-stricken horse trampled him on the chest.

Sillo saw all this spectacle from his window but he dared not even go out on the street. The rescue attempts went on for two days without result and the military command was completely desperate and stressed. They were in a hurry to fish up the body and send it to relatives before it began to be destroyed. Sillo took the bait. He went to Illo and said that he could take up the body but he wanted amnesty. Illo asked immediately those responsible for the rescue action and the military command issued, without thinking a second, a written amnesty decision.

When Sillo heard that he could go free after this he followed like a bird of joy. This was a simple thing for Sillo because he knew every edge and hole in the entire dam. He was asked if there were any measures to be taken for his personal safety. "None," he answered blankly. In the presence of dozens of military and high bosses, and all other curious who were gathered on site, came Sillo barefoot in parade-like reception. Sillo threw himself in the water and disappeared in the depths. After a long nail-biting moment he came up panting like a bear with the corpse under the arm.

The slightly shocked highest officer on site, who thought that even Sillo drowned in the dirty water, became beside himself and rushed towards Sillo. With sorrow-mixed joy the crowd applauded standing a long while. The highest boss who led the action and who did not believe completely in Sillo came forward and thanked him personally. The policeman who chased Sillo into the well a few months earlier could not refrain. He came to Sillo with an interpreter and asked: "For God's sake, tell me how you could hide in the big well." "God helped me," he answered with a smile on his lips. "Oh well, now I understand why you Christians will rise after death," said the policeman. The military called off the operation and Sillo became rational hero and completely legal citizen again.

Horoscope and Witchcraft Science in all Glory

Musa dbe Kinne survived the war in the village of Aynverdo and the subsequent difficult years in Midyat. Musa was nephew to the monk Ablahad Hiske, which is why he stayed a lot with his uncle in Mor Abrohom monastery east of the village. Musa became deacon in the church and with his beautiful voice he became uncle's liked youths and married Sedo who was one of the clan's most beautiful girls. The couple worked and toiled like everyone else to form a family with many children. But the couple had a worry that one did not want to admit: Musa was impotent, and just this was extremely shameful for a man. The couple kept this secret, but how long would this go on? Seven years of marriage in celibacy Sedo became pressed about why she does not become pregnant. One heard about treatment. An older priest in the village of Anhil healed these diseases, and in great secrecy one managed the healing priest in the village. After a while of deep diving in the patient's horoscope and various witchcraft sciences Musa was prescribed to do a cure. Eventually also the nuclear family became aware of this and in silence, during a dark autumn night, pass or swimming cross completely naked the Tigris river back and forth. "Oh, how cool," sighed Musa. It sounded like abracadabra but one had nothing to lose. The priest got his fee and Musa came home with the unwritten prescription.

Musa in the company of a faithful friend loaded some provisions on the donkey and set off an early morning to the river Tigris below Hasno d'Kifo. It was a thriller to force the crossing of the mightily trembling river in the middle of the night. Unfortunately one did not know the terrain and with pounding heart Musa undressed naked in the biting night wind and shivering and splashing he made it to the other side of the river and back. Well home after the rest it happened. Thanks and a thousand thanks to the priest and everyone else who helped. Musa recovered enough. Whether it was the psychological healing or the operation's horror

experience which in turn released the chemical adjustment in Musa's body that brought about this wonder we let each one judge for himself.

Sedo and Musa got three children together: Abe, Aho and Hazme. After exactly another seven years when Musa, a dark autumn morning was on his way to morning prayer in Mor Achisnojo church, he saw that some stones from the family's mausoleum had fallen down. This drew Musa's attention. Two days earlier an older relative had died and been buried there, but the entrance was walled up as one did after every burial. Musa went closer to the hill for to check. A large dog jumped against his face from inside the grave. Death scared Musa was struck back and fell completely still. Probably the stray dog had smelled its way to put the stones back and quite unexpectedly followed a deep shock. After a while a passerby saw him lie there over the high hill. Musa's health became worse and worse and after three days he left wife and children by the wall to the cemetery where he scratched the stones aside and left the entire family in deep sorrow. Sedo lived as a widow and supported children and grandchildren as bread baker for over sixty years.

SHEKHO AND MISHKO KILL THE MULLAH – p. 132

Shekho Sleymano descended from one of the area's famous Kurdish feudal clans. He was rich and owned a large farm in the central city with a beautiful view. Shekho was always well-dressed and moved among the celebrities. In his spare time, he played saz, gladly in friends' and acquaintances' entertainment contexts. In that way, he attracted a young Aramean woman who was actually unhappy in her marriage, which ended with her marrying him. Shekho was a Kurdish Muslim but culturally he lived like a genuine Christian city dweller. He spoke Aramean without an accent and moved mostly among rich Arameans at the city's leisure cafes.

The Mullah Hassan from the village of Saleh was one day going on a pilgrimage to Mecca. He came to Midyat to acquire travel documents, and when he was not finished with all necessary documents the same day, he was to stay overnight with his friend Shekho in Midyat. In the evening, some mutual acquaintances gathered, and the evening entertainment proceeded in good harmony. The mullah told gladly about his coming trip to Mecca and how he had in his whole life waited for that blessing's walk around Kaaba. The man became more and more intoxicated by the love for Allah and continued further with bragging about his private life in the village and about his plans to marry yet another young woman after the homecoming from Mecca.

The man's big mouth incited Shekho's male feelings because Shekho was childless and wanted to marry a fertile woman, but the opportunity was not there yet. Mostly Shekho was silent while the mullah spewed out everything he had in his head. "But wait! The man claims he is rich, can that be true?" thought Shekho.

Before bedtime, the mullah asked Shekho what he thought the mullah should take with him from the holy places and Saudi Arabia to resell and earn a little money on. "Well," said Shekho, "you have sharp business ideas, that applies to me actually too." "Well then, what do

you think, my friend?" "But what do you think yourself that you should take with you, my smart friend?" "You have good ideas and the train of thought of high quality, I must say." "Gold, silver or some similar goods that take minimal space in the bag, but do you have money for this?" "Yes, money exists. Now I have some gold coins, and cash exists at home." "Psst," said Shekho and held his forehead. "Do you know what I am thinking about?" "It is surely a smart advice to me." "Of course, otherwise I would never give you an advice. Do you know how much I like you," said Shekho. "No doubt about it, my beloved friend," answered the mullah quickly.

Shekho suggested the mullah to return home to the village and fetch everything he had in the cash chest and invest everything in gold jewelry in the Arab countries. He would double his capital and in that way be able to finance his planned new love. "You shall see to it that you sell your gold objects to the highest possible price here when you come back. But first we shall pray God that you carry out your holy duty without any adventures."

Shekho continued to praise the mullah and his deeds, and the mullah sat there and nodded, pleased and satisfied. "Oh, God be praised, may Allah bless you my holy brother," exclaimed the imam with charged feelings. "Of course I exist here in your service, my highly honored imam."

Mullah Hassan was deeply taken by the friend's business idea and began to feel a great eagerness to return home to the village, almost immediately, and take with him all his cash and come back to Shekho. The miserable mullah laughed and cackled too much until he incited the evil feelings of greed in his friend, and completely unknowingly, he dug his own grave.

Soon it was bedtime, but the imam could not sleep, and the thoughts ground in his head. Partly he thought about the long journey towards the unknown and partly on how he would convince the family at home about his business plans. It was, in other words, not easy to swindle the wife's private gold. The thoughts did not let sleep come. It was pitch black in the room, and the host family must now have already slept deeply, thought the imam. He got up completely quietly and approached the window towards the nightly starry sky. He took out his coin bag and counted all the gold coins one by one. To be extra sure of how much he had, he counted the coins twice.

In the room next door lay Shekho with his back turned to his wife, equally busy with his own thoughts. But his thoughts were of evil. Shekho's pointed and anxious voice was heard a little weakly together with the coins' jingling in the room next door in the completely silent night. He stretched himself a little longer than the imam and needed planning. Usually, Shekho was seized by satanic thoughts to swindle the imam's next good—the imam's travel cash that jingles, he thought. But his gold coins... No, there can be repercussions of that, and it is ugly if he gets discovered. "Steal, rob him, or hire robbers? How? Where and when?" he thought. Furthermore, the victim is his guest, and this mullah Hassan was not a person to play with. "Isn't it better to get rid of him completely so that the whole sin follows in the grave?" he thought further.

How he turned and twisted the matter, the greed to access the imam's gold coins did not let sleep come to his eyes. The gold coins' ringing spun around in his head until he disappeared in nightmares. "Up with you!", said the wife early in the morning. "The guest is in full swing dressing to travel."

After breakfast, Shekho followed his guest a good bit on the street and advised him to come back the day after early in the morning. To be extra sure, he explained which way he should take. The imam thanked for the kindness and not least for the advice about his own safety.

Shekho immediately started his plans. He hired an assassin named Mishko for two coins and explained his plan. The criminal would handle the dirty job for two gold coins, one cash and the other after the assignment was completed. Mishko accepted with joy without even thinking of the consequences. According to Shekho's instructions, the imam would early in the morning perform his morning prayer in the village's mosque and directly thereafter he would come to Midyat. It is approximately a seven-kilometer walk and it would take just over an hour.

Shekho with his crony set off at the same time to be on site in good time and look around a little until the imam would show up. Two kilometers north of the city, the duo stopped at a small cave and for the last time they fine-tuned their plan. Shekho had a strong rope with him as a murder weapon which he tested during the past night in the stable on a post, and it held well.

Mishko was young and strong with a solid experience of similar assignments, and according to him, this was an easy match. The plan was that Mishko would have a rolled cigarette in his mouth and step forward towards the imam to ask him if he had fire to light the cigarette. At the same moment, he would throw himself over the imam and strangle him to death with the rope. Simple it would be.

Well prepared on site and after yet another quick review of the plan, Shekho stood against the wall in the cave and a little tense he puffed his cigarette. Mishko stood up by the cave entrance completely restlessly gnawing on nails with his gaze fixed towards the mountain from where the victim would appear. The anxiety became increasingly terrible, and one or another exchange of words between the gentlemen during the waiting time became without significant content.

Shekho took out his revolver, blew away possible dust in the barrel, checked if it was ready to fire and cocked it until it was completely okay. He put it carefully back in his pocket and took up the tobacco jar to roll a cigarette. Mishko became terrified of the client's ready-to-fire and live revolver. "The victim shall be strangled with rope, why would Shekho have a firearm with him?" he asked himself. "Could it be for me, to sweep away all evidence? Is it possible that uncle wants me on my knees? Is Shekho so cruel?" thought Mishko in mortal agony and went down powerless and trembling like a dog. "What is it with you, you cowardly idiot?" screamed Shekho. "It was nothing. I drank a little too much alcohol this morning," said Mishko. "I told you to drink moderately. Are you afraid?" "Yes, afraid but a little hesitant,

can't I take him with the weapon?" "Can this..." asked the assassin with a completely lifeless voice. "No, shots can be heard by someone. We stick to our plan," answered Shekho.

In the middle of the waiting's timeless slumber, the church bells rang in the city, and Shekho moved closer to the cave's entrance to hear better if it is the usual morning prayer or if it is a death knell. "Do you know what that sound is?" "Yes. It is the infidels' churches." "Christian city dwellers are more faithful than you and I. I was born and raised in this city and I would never want to exchange life in Midyat with any Muslim community whatsoever." "Uncle Shekho, the only thing we hear from our religious leaders is the word *gavur*." "Say what you want, you stupid donkey. I would be much happier if I dared to confess myself to Christianity but now is not the time for this," said Shekho with a deep drag of smoke. "I choose death rather than converting to Christianity." "You are right. I would never get a donkey like you among the Arameans in all of Midyat," answered Shekho.

Shekho's plans for the entire operation were to hold as planned, both time and space. Suddenly a human figure appeared plunging from the horizon. "Is it him?" whispered Shekho and held Mishko's hand to give the signal at the right moment. The time began to shrink towards the end, and the duo sat completely silent at the cave's mouth like the savanna's lions waiting at the right distance for their prey. Mishko with a cigarette between his fingers tested it in his mouth up and down. The victim was to be strangled to death as close to the cave's root as possible to drag the body away.

"Oh, my dear friend, I am lucky that you showed up like this. Do you have a light?" asked the Imam. "No reserve, but you can handle it alone," egged Shekho quietly to Mishko. He walked lulling towards the mullah. At the meadow, Mishko stepped down, stopped in the middle of the path and went a little down. It holds. "Don't be so stressed boy, you can handle it. If it becomes difficult there is..." Mishko loudly: "Do you have fire?" "By all means," answered the Imam and showed the cigarette with happy mood as if he wanted to hug. Mishko held the cigarette with shaking fingers in his mouth and bent over. "Who is this smelly man and why is he shaking?" thought the Mullah. The Imam did not have time to finish thinking, backed a step a little hesitant and looked for a lighter in his pocket. Mishko smiled.

Mishko flew over him with the rope in one hand and both fell to the ground. Mishko tried to roll the rope around the mullah's neck, but it was not simple. In the heat of the battle, the imam struggled back with all his power and broke free. But the poor human ran straight into the cave where Shekho waited with a drawn revolver. "You cursed..." he had time to say before he was wrestled down by Shekho. "How good!", whispered Shekho, "we didn't need to drag him into the cave, he came himself."

Inside the cave, the mullah was strangled by Shekho and Mishko in peace and quiet until he released his last breath. Shekho immediately searched for the intended loot and to his surprise, he found significantly more than he counted on; a large bundle of well-packed cash and about twenty gold coins. "Hand over the gold", he roared at the assassin and put the pistol barrel against his neck. "No, I promise on my honor... How would I come to steal from

you?", said Mishko with raised hands. "Well, he had at least thirty gold coins. I heard myself when he counted them at night", answered Shekho.

Shekho went through all the accounts several times and searched the trembling young man's all pockets without finding any more coins. Shekho had his suspicions that the villain Mishko had swallowed in secret, conjuring to himself some gold coins during the execution tumult. There was no time for further bickering and the duo disappeared quickly from the place as if they had never been there. This case was never legally solved. Shekho bought himself a durable alibi and kept his loot.

In older days Shekho had adopted an Aramean boy named Baso. He and the wife raised the boy in accordance with Christian values and gave him the opportunity to educate himself so that he became a well-behaved guy. When Baso became an adult he was left to his relatives.

CLAN LEADER STEALS POOR PEOPLE'S PROPERTY – p. 138

Moster Maryam worked hard all days to support her family. Maryam had for several months saved from her small household budget and invested in a pregnant cow, due to calve in the beginning of spring. During the entire winter half-year, Aunt Maryam took care of her expensive cow like the family's gold nugget, which is why she had beforehand expectations about the cow and family support. The family would be happy and self-sufficient in all dairy products.

One cursed April day, the days before the cow was to calve, she did not come home with the large herd. The cow was lost in the forest. Maryam became very worried and began first to look for the cow in the immediate area but did not find it. In the evening, with the help of the neighbors, she started a large search around in the nearest areas, but the cow was gone; it had been swallowed from the earth in a strange way.

Maryam was a widow with three teenage children and lived in southern Midyat. At night when everyone slept poor Maryam could not fall asleep, so she took an oil lamp with her and searched in every shed, cave, and well. But the cow was not there.

Aunt Maryam was normally a wise woman and in this case, she tried to use all her wisdom to find her cow. So when she did not find it in the immediate area her suspicions went towards thieves outside the city. She called to her some older gentlemen and together they analyzed the case in small details. A perpetrator profile was created, and this would be a professional thief who would sell the cow on to people far away. This would perhaps be a little difficult to implement considering that the cow was heavily pregnant, but thieves are thieves and can accomplish much within the industry. The third theory, which was more probable, could be anyone of the hundreds of thieves who completely or partially could fit into the picture.

Early in the morning the day after she went to all shepherds, city guards, and other persons who could have heard or seen something. But neither here was there anyone who knew anything. Resigned and completely tired Maryam leaned against the shop entrance to the village Taka, which Shabo had a dispute with about a similar case as Maryam's. Someone

gave a tip about Karacao. "Yes," said Maryam, quickly with a deep sigh and became happy that she got a task. Without wasting too much time she went around and gathered more information about Karacao and his doings in Midyat. The puzzle pieces fell into place one by one. Karacao was a highly interesting person and she decided to put him against a layman council and let him swear under oath. Maryam gathered some gentlemen and asked to fetch Karacao to Midyat to interrogate him.

Karacao was a known professional thief who committed crimes under the protection of the clan leader Hassanko. To be able to ravage freely he shared everything he stole with Hassanko and therefore he never came to the meeting without the protector's permission.

Gabro Isa-Zatte and the temporarily gathered council sent a messenger to Hassanko in Mzizah and asked him to immediately come to Midyat and bring Karacao with him. The messenger explained why he should come to Midyat and meet the council. At the same time as the messenger explained to the clan leader, preparations were going on for a large festivity with boiling cauldrons in the large yard of the clan leader. The smell of the boiling meat stuck in the messenger's nostrils until late in the afternoon. The messenger Amse came home running in the same pace all the way from Mzizah to Midyat and told everything he had been part of on the large yard of the clan leader. The smell of good meat almost broke his fast. Thereafter he went straight to the priest to feel safe if his fast was not broken and if he committed a sin smelling meat smell at close range in the middle of the ongoing Great Lent. A soft priest father advised him to fast an extra day after Easter to secure his place on the right side of Jesus in heaven.

Karacao had slaughtered the animal in his hunting cabin the same night he stole it. First, he separated the fine pieces to give them to the protector family and kept the rest at home for his family. Hassanko knew everything about the event and was aware that the cow belonged to people from Midyat but that it would be such a big issue he did not think. But it was not so difficult to lie to the Midyat people and convince them that he was not involved. He had been involved in worse things and he managed in a very smooth way. Should it get tangled it was just to swear himself free.

Hassanko was not at all forced to be in Midyat but to not get at odds with Christian city dwellers, and above all with the gentlemen who wanted to put him to the wall, he came riding on a horse with hat and black glasses to Midyat with two farmhands and Karacao on his heels. They were met by some persons outside the city and from there they would go to a suitable meeting place.

Outside Selim's cafeteria on the upper commercial street, the company stopped. They were to hold a short meeting where the suspect Karacao was to swear an oath. But immediately a hateful atmosphere arose in the open square and some youths had already gathered, some curious with Aunt Maryam present. They went up to Karacao to lecture him for educational purposes but were stopped by the older ones. "Not now in the council's presence," said one of them to stop the youths.

"We don't need to be so many," said Hassanko. "It doesn't need to be so many, but the horse—" "No."

By tradition women were not allowed to enter cafeterias, which is why Aunt stood far down in the hierarchy among the gathered crowd. One of the men gave the horse's leash to Aunt Maryam with a ten-coin to accommodate it in the inn—khan. Maryam could not refuse. She took the horse reluctantly with great hope that the men would protest. She pressed for a confession. After a little while she was back, but to her great disappointment, everyone outside the cafeteria was fully busy saying goodbye to Hassanko.

Maryam struck with her question about what they had decided. "We are going home," said Gabro, "we didn't agree on anything." "What didn't you agree on?" "The voice didn't help, I will explain to you later." "I don't want to hear excuses, what happened to my cow?" "Karacao swore in front of the whole council so he has nothing to do with the matter." "Oh well, and you believed...?" "What can one do, Maryam?" "Well, there remains much to do, I will myself take Hassanko by the collar."

The clan leader saw Maryam's anger and went up to her. "I promise, if I find out who has stolen your cow I will cut off his horns," he said. "No, I don't believe you. I want to interrogate Karacao myself in front of you and the whole council." "How can you speak to Hassanko in that way?" screamed one of those present. Another urged her to leave the square fast.

Maryam went up and promised never to give up until she herself got to interrogate the thief. More people had gathered in the square and everyone agreed with her. "Okay," screamed Gabro, "we go in to the cafeteria again. Do you want to join?" "Yes," she said from the stairs to shoemaker Jakob's shop and screamed loudly, "Of course I shall be there."

Clan leader Hassan sensed trouble but he had promised too much so he was forced to keep his promise. The chief's grave was holy for the clan and buried in the large shrine. Osmano, whom the whole region respected, was dead. Long before, the Hassanko clan swore not by his name in vain. No one in the clan's presence was allowed to take the name lightly. Osman's grave was holy for the clan and thus highly respected by everyone in the entire region. Aunt Maryam knew this tradition well and she wanted Karacao to swear by Osmano's grave in front of the chief and the whole council that he did not steal her cow.

Once inside the gathering place where everyone sat on their chairs Maryam took the floor without wasting any more time and said: "Do you hear me, gentlemen, all of you sitting here! Karacao shall swear clearly and distinctly by Osmano's grave in Anatolia that he did not steal my cow."

Everyone turned to Maryam and waited nervously for what would happen. Karacao looked in the clan leader's direction and waited for the spectacle. But the clan leader stood there mute like a lifeless statue. Karacao held his chin and looked upwards. "No, I do not swear," he said.

A sigh was heard through the whole room and then a great silence. An angry Gabro went up and dealt a slap to Karacao so he fell backward like a shot bird. "You cursed idiot, you have sworn so many times by Allah and all prophets. Is Osman greater than Allah?" "Stop!" screamed the clan leader, "the question is solved." He nodded at Maryam and said: "Your cow is with me, sister, I guarantee your losses," and stood up. The story of Aunt Maryam's cow ended with victory thanks to her wisdom.

CRIME BUT NO PUNISHMENT – p. 141

The section that follows was and is still a taboo subject within the religious cultures but above all in the Christian family. Guilty or innocent, it was the woman who was the root of the sin, according to public opinion. Both the victim and the perpetrator in the story are still alive and therefore the names are fictitious. It has been nearly fifty years since the event occurred but there can still be consequences if perpetrators are revealed. The purpose is not to poke in the wound after so many years but the event is a part of Midyat's dirty, unwanted history. Good or evil, that is up to the reader to decide. Events of this character were not common within the Christian Midyat culture but they occurred unfortunately. And one did one's utmost to preserve the girl's anonymity which is why she bore the guilt for the rest of her life.

The Gevri family owned a vineyard with hundreds of grapevines a few hundred meters from the community's outskirts. An early spring day the family hired a Christian day laborer to prune the bushes in the vineyard. It is Lent and Midyat's worker shall take his first meal only at eleven o'clock after the customary prayer before lunch.

Grandma Maro showed the worker to the vineyard and came home. She immediately cooked the fast day's soup number one, which used to be lentil soup. Shortly before eleven the food was ready, and grandma filled half a copper bucket of soup with a loaf of bread and a fistful of large yellow onions wrapped in a cloth and straight to the vineyard. "Do any of the children want to come along?", asked grandma. "Yes, grandma, I want to come along", said the grandchild Helen. Fast as it went, through narrow alleys to the big road that goes to the vineyards. "Why do you walk so fast, grandma?" "Because! I want to make it back to the service only." "Oh well, but grandma, don't stress yourself, I can walk with the food alone." "No, alone girl!? You can furthermore be robbed of the expensive copper bucket." "No grandma, who can rob me of the bucket? It is only a few hundred meters left." "Sure, it is only a bit left." Old grandma stopped. "Okay, grandma's kind girl, it is not so far left."

Maro sat on a stone, took Helen in her arms and kissed her on the forehead. As to show gratitude, left the bucket in the little girl's hand, showed her the rest of the way and turned back to make it to the service in good time. Maro turned around after a few meters and observed the grandchild's brisk steps towards the vineyard. She felt proud of the child's courage and shouted to her: "Helen, leave the bucket to the uncle and come back fast as the wind." "Yes, grandma," answered Helen by waving her hand. Proud grandma came home with sight on the church tower and the bell that soon would strike for the forgiveness of sins.

The young Birho sat on the roof and saw the food delivery right below, but what drew his interest was that the grandmother left the bucket in the hand of the little girl who continued towards the forest skipping completely alone. Birho knew well and knew where the girl was heading. He had heard clearly when Maro shouted at the girl to leave the food and come back without delay.

A mentally ill Birho climbed down from the roof behind the house to the little one and with evil thoughts in his head he took up the chase after the girl. He knew the garden without drawing others' attention, wound his way out of the community and hid behind a stone pile where Helen would pass when she would come back home. Sick in his soul Birho began to plan how he would lure the girl into the cave a bit from there. "Violence? No, that won't work," he thought. "What if she screams, in that case bind her mouth." In private, moreover a little girl who certainly had never been involved in such devilish deeds. "What little girl? What if she falls for me?"

At the same moment, the church bell rang with a harsh sound. It was Mort Schmuni church's bell. Birho made the sign of the cross over his chest. One bell ring, then another, and with a guilty conscience, Birho made two crosses, regretted his evil plans, and turned home immediately. The satanic desire weighed heavier than the church bell's call to the heavenly kingdom, and Birho turned back. Damn it, unbelievable, the little girl comes waving, singing softly toward him, unsuspecting. He turned back and hid behind the stone pile.

"Hi," the girl called from afar to calm her fear and loneliness. "What are you doing there?" "First tell me your name, then I'll tell you mine." "Nothing, do you know me?" "Well, what was your name?" "My name is Helen." "Oh, what a beautiful name, and how beautifully you sing, can you continue?" "Sure, I can sing beautifully, but I have to go home quickly." "No, why quickly? Your grandmother is in church now, why hurry? Come here and see what a nice hut we had when we were little children." "Buuu, no, not the hut, I heard there are witches there." "Witches..? No, not here in daylight. Actually, I was the one who scared the little children the other evening, were you there when everyone ran away?" "No, I wasn't there, but my brother was. The monster scared the life out of him, but how can you become a witch?" "Come up and take a look in the cave just a little," said Birho with a hoarse voice. "Yes, I have the ability to become one." "How, can you show me?"

He looked around to see if anyone was watching them. No, the terrain was empty. God's people were in church, and the rest sat at home eating the first meal of Lent. It was only the monster Birho who moved there. Helen stepped over the stone to him and wanted to see with wide eyes how he transformed into a witch. Poor girl, without the slightest suspicion of evil, she stepped into the monster's embrace. This is not the kind witch Helen had heard about in some stories. It is a real beast that mercilessly is about to destroy a young person's life. "No, stop, please," she tried to pull away from him with all her strength, but it did not help. He held her mouth and dragged her into the cave where he completed an act that was rare in the idyllic community, ruining the little girl's life.

Cursed Birho! May God burn you in the bottom of hell. While old grandma was in church, a crime that one can commit against a child. When in the process of praying for the forgiveness of sins he commits the worst sin.

Paralyzed Helen throws herself on the street and runs for her life home to the door where she waits a while and corrects her hair and clothes. Worried Maro opens the door and at the first moment she senses that the girl has been subjected to something terrible. "You cursed kid, have you lost the bucket?" Helen fell uncontrollably into crying. "Let this not be a child's play," thought Maro with others in the family. Helen was taken in with some slaps and she coughed out everything she had been subjected to. With threat that the father would cut off her tongue if she would reveal this to outsiders she was put with greatest seriousness in house arrest waiting for the family's adult men.

A hungry Maro was soon to eat but the food got stuck in her throat. The greatest sin that she had never imagined could happen was a fact in front of her eyes. The grandchild whom she raised to a fine girl is quite unexpectedly wrapped in the worst shame and lies in the room next door. The girl who was to wear her wedding dress when she would reach that age now lies there like a wrapped corpse ready for burial. What makes the matter even worse was that Maro felt a bad conscience because she had let the girl go alone to the vineyard. Grandma Maro fell into a prolonged crying that haunted her nearly thirty years, actually all the way to the grave.

"God, you who are merciful, help us to be able to move on with this," was the first and silent wish. But the other. Finally, they came to the conclusion to put the lid on the whole thing for all future. The family gathered in the priest's presence and talked in detail through the one option. Maro was of another attitude. She wanted to ease a little on her conscience by finding the perpetrator, save the family's honor by taking revenge or force the idiot to marry the girl. Who is he? According to the event description he exists in the immediate area but he can also be anywhere. Who is the criminal? The questions are many and poor Maro is completely alone.

Maro took the girl with her and went out to show her some youths who might be the perpetrator. It is an early weekday, the sun shines with beautiful rays over the landscape, birds chirp and break the silence in the otherwise still nature with their sounds. How can one force him out without revealing oneself, how? Where can we find him? Garibo with his teenage boy is working in his yard. Quite unexpectedly Aunt Maro comes with her grandchild winding through the vine bushes straight towards Garibo with aim at the teenage boy. Garibo rises curious. "Welcome, sister Maro." "Thanks," she said shortly with her hand over her mouth to not show her angrily trembling lips. Maro approaches with the girl in hand, stops opposite and asks the girl: "Is it him? Check carefully, my little girl." Helen looked up at the boy and answered directly, very quietly, "No grandma, this is Juhan, I know him."

Helen, 12–13 years old, quite thin with frail body, tired face, swollen eyes as if she had cried uninterruptedly all her life. Garibo and his boy stood there completely mute and regarded the sight, completely devastated. Maro took the girl by the shoulder and turned without saying

another word. "No you don't, my sister, you don't leave here without saying why you scrutinized Juhan in that way. Is he suspected of something?" asked Garibo. "No, it was nothing, forget it," she answered. "No then, you don't leave here without explanation," said Garibo and stopped them from leaving the place. "I want to hear why you came all the way here to see through my boy."

Maro fell into hysterical crying and told him that a young man had the day before tricked her granddaughter out of her money. "Money...? No, I don't agree to such explanations, you don't cry for a few lira. This must be a serious matter. You shall say as it is. You shall promise that it shall be kept between us two, you and your boy," she said and continued, "a 'pitsch' (bastard) has raped the girl..." She could not finish the sentence before she fell into a crying attack. "Oh, sister Maro, that was sad to hear, forgive that I shouted at you. But does it have nothing to do with the matter?" "No," she said and left the yard to search further. "Raped... what did he do?" wondered Juhan. He misinterpreted what Aunt Maro said. "Quiet," said the father, "you are too young to understand such things."

According to rumors, Aunt Maro had revealed the perpetrator, but with threats of killing the girl's father the family dared not take the criminal by the collar and the sequel to the story remained unsolved.

DREAM OF WEALTH CAN END IN THE PSYCHE – p. 145

Malak was involved during his young years with goods smuggling across the border. Smuggled goods and passed across the border between Turkey and Syria. There was a relatively large market for this, one bribed the border guards on the Turkish side and crossed. There were many who had this as their main occupation. One crossed the fifty-meter wide minefield in the darkest hours of the day, with life at stake. Pack animal caravans and flocks of meat animals passed through narrow tracks that were only partially cleared of mines. No safety existed when one crossed the border, for bombs could explode at any time, and it did many times. One risked life under the pitch-black night through the high-grown vegetation. He who perished in the middle of the minefield became food for hyenas and birds of prey. Beyond fearful wolf rumors one could be shot by one's partner to keep the entire profit, or be executed just before payment.

In the late 1960s the activity became less profitable, but a more profitable activity had appeared which was more dangerous: trade in opium. A stream of large opium loads was transported from the Malatya-Militini (in Aramean) area in Turkey to Iraq; a very profitable profession with at least as great danger. Vehicle transports were not common. The transports took place on pack animals and mostly under the protection of darkness since it was safer. But what was very strange was that people who were involved in opium trade were liked and respected in society. The Turabdin human had nothing to do with drug use but the poison passed at night to the Orient like any smuggled good. The population barely knew the word narcotics.

Malak quit goods smuggling but to supplement the household budget he bought meat animals from the sparsely populated area and sold them at the city's bazaars. A late summer day Malak bought a batch of lambs from a farmer in the Ömerli area. In the morning the day after he took his newly bought animals and set off homewards, slowly grazing through the forest to be home before dark. At sunset Malak arrived. Through narrow alleys he whipped while answering one or another question about his business. It is animal time and it teems with people and domestic animals on the streets during this time. "Malak, what have you acquired again?" asked the neighbor Ibrahim. "I bought them today." "One hundred fifty pieces? Surely it is cheap?" Malak was extremely hungry and thus also tired and had no desire at all to answer any questions whatsoever. Ibrahim treated him with a smile and turned his back. Malak got annoyed at Ibrahim, but he cursed quietly and whipped faster to reach home. The other neighbor Yassa shouted from the edge of the roof, "what have you bought again?" "You see, brother, I cannot refrain from my business." "Yes, admit but what does such a one cost when they are like this only bones and skin?" "He, you shut up you cursed," roared Malak and whipped on even faster. Poor animals began to run confused to right and left while Malak became more loud, irritated and a cluster of the lambs went in through an open door to one of the neighbors. Malak squeezed in through the door to herd the animals back.

"Oh, Malak," said the third neighbor Camilo. "What has happened to you, why do you rush after these strange animals?" "What strange, they are mine." "But why are you so angry?" "No, it is nothing, I am just angry at Yassa, he was really stupid." "Have you fought with Yassa? By the way Malak, you don't look healthy in the face." Malak was not chatty towards Camilo and he disappeared as angry as he stormed in. Curious Camilo went out on the street, followed a little after Malak and felt with his palm one of the lambs on the back. "Poor man, you have bought dying animals with your money." "Cursed people, you are just envious of me," he said and butted Camilo in the back with his rough baton.

Malak kicked the main entrance so the whole family jumped up in the yard. "Why are you so angry?" became the wife's first reaction. "Can you shut up woman? I am roaring hungry," he said with his staff in hand held high. The wife Shushe disappeared to the sister-in-law in fear of being beaten. The brother Abdo came to the yard to calm him down but Malak began to beat the animals he brought home and completely angrily began to scream at the wife about why she had not cooked food. The brother Abdo came fast with some food and calmed him down. In the evening the neighbors gathered to apologize for their bad jokes towards Malak but it was too late. Malak felt mentally ill and before bedtime the family called the priest so he blew on Malak's face to drive away evil spirits. Before the priest father left his patient he blessed the bowl of water and asked Malak to drink it and go to bed. But Malak took slowly the water bowl and poured it on the priest's head himself and disappeared in sleep. "Oh, sorry father," said the wife and ran into the kitchen to fetch a towel. "It doesn't matter my daughter, it is not he who acts but it is the evil spirits, but soon they are gone and Malak will be healthy again." "How good," she said. "But honored father, can you stay a while longer so that the devil has left the entire house?" continued Shushe and fetched a dish with grapes. The priest sneaked quietly and observed the patient until he disappeared in the wind.

Haffo's house was targeted by thieves who stole the family's own twelve sheep. Malak woke up with a bad psyche and reached quickly the neighborhood. A theft gang got the news about Malak's sheep and came in the middle of the night, tore a hole behind the house towards the family. Malak after the thieves' strike went to the stable to see if the sheep were there, but they were not there and he came to the wife and asked if she had brought in the family's dairy sheep into another stable. "Sleep Malak, the sheep are in the stable. Come and sleep my little old man, you are not well." "What, I am not well you cursed old woman! The sheep are gone!" "Lord God!", she said, half awake.

Instead of wasting more time Malak pushed the outer door and ran out after the thieves. He knocked on the door to Camilo, the next neighbor on the other side of the street, to help with the thief hunt. "Poor Malak, he went crazy", said the neighbors to each other and closed the door after them. Malak ran alone barefoot with light clothes all the way to the village of Bacinne to a known bandit whom Malak suspected of the crime. But the suspected man slept deeply in his bed. He got up slowly and handed a rifle to Malak and pushed him out. Malak came back just as fast uncertain as if he was in a dream. No, it was not a dream. He ran over a mile back and forth nauseous and at home he saw with his own eyes that the sheep were gone. Malak fell down completely unresponsive like a fully treated patient, and to calm him down one was forced to bind him by hands and feet. Malak was taken to the psychiatric clinic in the city of Elazig where he received care for more than a month. He became partially healthy but he never became the old joyful Malak. Bad jokes broke a completely healthy human to death.

THE GIRL WHO WAS TRANSFORMED INTO A BOY THROUGH BAPTISM – p. 148

The girl child was to be baptized in the monastery Mor Gabriel. God does not love boys more than girls and he who created the child a girl could create her a complete and fully equipped boy. If God had created a human with female qualities, why would the saint work against his God and transform her into a boy?

At the time of this strange event in the 19th century people lived in religious hysteria with demons, evil and good spirits, magic and the witches' natural influence on the Christian social life. Witches existed and everyone believed one hundred percent in the creatures with divine powers in all religions. Witches were everywhere in the room, in the rooms where one slept, in the stables, in the caves and the history books tell that a girl was transformed into a boy the night before. On the yard's dark corners witches could be everywhere, and they were active only at nights but also daytime in dark places. Numerous tales are told with witches involved; witch families, witch weddings and nightly witch camps on the hills around a large bonfire. One spoke in respect about witches because they could be present. One didn't even mention the creatures by name but one said "those who are better than us". In all stories, the witch was an older woman with disheveled hair. People hid kitchen knives and other sharp objects in safe places so that the witches would not hurt themselves or their children when they moved at night. The witch could take revenge on the family if she hurt herself or her children when she moved in a house.

The Johanen family was one of the richest and most successful families in Midyat. The couple Johanen gave birth to a boy who died as an infant and then they got eight girls in a row. They longed for a boy more than anything else and at every pregnancy the parents prayed day and night to get a boy. But it always became girls and one thanked God for the gift anyway. The closest relatives, completely meanly and brazenly, began already to share the Johanen family's fields and other fixed property between themselves. According to tradition the girl child could not inherit the parents. The father Johanen got constant nightmares when he thought about this. The wife began to get older and older and the chance to have children decreased for every year. In his desperation, Johanen sought a well-known wizard to get help when the Christian saints didn't help. The wizard told that the house's evil witches had taken the couple's first child as a revenge, but why the witch mother wanted to take revenge on them the wizard could not explain.

When Johanen was newly married and in the middle of winter cold he was going to the flour mill several miles away, but he bought flour from a thief and to not reveal the thief he kept this secret from the wife. But when she saw the flour hidden in the pantry he was forced to lie and say that it could be witches who filled up the family's flour stock. If it was that lie that annoyed the witch no one knew with certainty. The family had in any case such suspicions.

The ninth pregnancy was a gift from God and resulted in a boy. It became a huge commotion in the house and the nuclear family's older women figured out to explain that the newcomer was a girl. Partly to not draw attention and partly because they had been warned by the wizard earlier, that the witch hag could strangle the baby boy in sleep. It was the very closest in the family who knew this secret, but how long would this hold?

Johanen confessed in the family's church and revealed to the priest the child's sex. The priest said that the child should have a bible and a pillow to keep the evil spirits away and that they should never leave the child alone in the room. The mother stuck therefore strictly to the priest's instructions. "Thanks God for the extremely good gift, hope that the house's witches let the children live. God, you are merciful and the day when we are forced to reveal the truth about the child's sex He will help us", thought the family.

In the monastery Mor Gabriel there was a skull that belonged to an Arab monk from the 8th century. The monk had become Christian when he had heard the saint himself speak to him from the grave four months after the saint's death. The myth says that the Arab man had been saved after this and stayed as a monk until death and that his skull performed miracles. Women who did not have children or who wanted boys poured cold water over their naked bodies with this skull as a bowl. This treatment went on for hundreds of years and goes on still. The skull lay earlier in the mouth of the open grave but now it is hidden away from the public. Families who got boy children after this treatment considered it a gift from the saint and they were baptized there in the monastery and were called Gavriye. Some Muslims and Yezidis believed in this but they called their children Garabeto, Omar or Ammaro.

Johanen's wife had showered with this bone skull several times and finally they were heard. The family got a well-formed boy but publicly, or in the circle of acquaintances, it was a girl

with the name Seyde. Before the spring edge the family loaded two mules with provisions and went to the monastery Mor Gabriel to baptize the child. Johanen was rich so he donated generously to the monastery and after the evening mass all monastery inhabitants were treated to dinner. After the food everyone gathered on the upper floor around Johanen for the religious evening entertainment.

Next morning after the service under the leadership of the bishop the baptism began. Johanen had revealed the family's secret to the bishop so he was prepared. "Praised be God" shouted the bishop loudly when he lifted the child out of the baptismal font, "praised be God", repeated the monks around the bishop like a choir song from the whole congregation. And the so-called "hallelujah-shout"... hallelujah! In the kingdom of heaven there is nothing impossible said a satisfied bishop and the monks answered equally proud. The child who was born as a girl was transformed completely incredibly to a well-formed boy in an instant, hallelujah!

The event was announced as a miracle which many historians put a question mark around. The boy did not get the name Gavriye because the family's first boy was named so and died as an infant. The bishop called the boy Saado, that means happiness in the Syriac language. Just like that, the boy donated the greatest happiness to the parents. The story may have another physical reality. The child may have been hermaphrodite and nature did its part already at an early age which is quite common within the medical world. Saado became big, married, had several children and lived a long life.

BEAUTIFUL BUT UNHAPPY – p. 151

Considering those who were involved and their relatives all names in the following story are fictitious. Sara was the daughter of one of the middle-class artisan families in the heroes' city Midyat. She was a well-raised girl in accordance with the Christian culture's high morals. Sara was in the beginning of her adult age tall, slim and had very fine appearance. The parents had expected a highly educated young man from a higher class and there were plenty of these in the surroundings who wanted her as wife. Girls in her class were attractive among youths from big cities. There had appeared some such types but Sara chose away, which she had both time and many admirers so she had the opportunity to pick and choose.

A young boy by name, whom we want to call Dani, from Midyat had recently finished his academic education and was about to establish himself in the hometown Midyat. Dani was one of the finest youths in the city before he began his education in Istanbul. He was loved and respected among the youths and not least among the girls. Sara did not know Dani personally but she had heard fairytale stories about his courage and everything else positive and she would hardly say no if she was asked to marry him.

Dani came, quite rightly, to Midyat and he got engaged to the beautiful Sara. The city's youths drew a deep sigh when the beautiful couple had taken each other's hands, but the coin's flip side was completely different. Dani had left Midyat for studies, a nice, questioning, lively young man and he came back as a completely different human. Studies had

transformed the nice young guy into a socially mute figure. Dani had become a one-way Jehovah's Witness of sectarian model. Sara was disappointed in her fiancé already at the first meeting the day after the engagement. It was not at all the human she had expected him to be. He sat there and read the bible to her until she got tired and rose from there.

"Sara is not used to listening to Jesus," he said to his mother-in-law, "I will therefore transform her into a true Christian human." Disappointed mother-in-law answered nodding, "we'll see." "I think the whole family should be transformed into real Christian individuals." "Oh well," she said, and went out to her daughter. Dani stayed alone in the room a while, he began to read aloud from the bible but there was no one in there to listen. Sara's family gathered in the evening and discussed what they had seen and heard, "it is strange but we will see what happens in the future." During the time Dani was there he had with him some bibles that he distributed to each one in the family and began seriously preaching from the bible with fire. "But we will see what happens in the future," thought the family, instead of talking to his future wife. "It doesn't look good."

After another few days Dani came there and began to interrogate them in bible studies. "Do you hear me?" said the father-in-law, "we are Christians, and more than that we cannot become." He began to think seriously how they would handle the situation. The family gathered, but it was not a simple decision. "We have to rethink the continuation," they thought. Dani had promised his father-in-law that he would come to them in the evening, and the family had prepared themselves to discuss the continuation of the engagement. The family waited and waited, but Dani never showed up. "No, he didn't come," said the father-in-law and rose to go to the cafe, as he did daily. He opened the door. "Oh, what are you doing here in the dark? You scared the life out of me," roared the father-in-law. "I am waiting for Jesus to open the door for me," answered Dani. "Jesus! You mean the virgin Mary's son?" "Yes, Jesus said, 'knock on the door and I shall open for you,' and now I am waiting for him to open the door." "How long have you waited?" "A good while." "Have you knocked? We didn't hear." "Yes, I have done that, but quite quietly." "How long would you wait, if I didn't come and open?" "Until my Jesus would come to me." "Oh well, Jesus is not here and I don't think you need to wait any longer. It is better that you go home and don't come here anymore," said a furious father-in-law and slammed the door behind him.

Dani returned home without saying a word. The day after everything Dani's family had bought for Sara was sent back, and the young couple's engagement became a memory only. Sara had become more famous and more popular among the youths, and after this event there were many who wanted to propose to her. The next guy who proposed to Sara was Malik, a young guy from the city who studied at one of Germany's best colleges. By this time they knew each other well. Malik was social, pleasant and wise, and the families thought that the couple Malik and Sara fit together and were created for each other. There were no obstacles in the way, and in a short time the youths got engaged. Shortly after they were wed solemnly like a prince and a princess. The Monday thereafter a group of acquaintances gathered at the bus station and said goodbye with shouts and applause until they stepped into the bus. The couple would be away for two weeks, first a month in Istanbul and thereafter fly to Germany.

Poor Midyat's boys who admired Sara during all these years stood just and settled for looking but not touching.

Sara's family felt content that their daughter was happily in the company of the pleasant young man and that she would soon be in Germany, which was equated with a paradise on earth. At the same time, gossip was spreading about how much gold he had bought, how much he paid as a dowry, and in which currency. Unexpectedly, Sara returned alone from Istanbul after only a few days. The delicate news of Sara's return home hit little Midyat like a bomb, and malicious rumors about why she had come back began to spread. These did not seem to subside until a reasonable explanation was made public. The parents were taken by surprise when Sara came home alone, and the family withdrew from the public eye until things calmed down, but the opposite happened.

According to the Christian faith, a man may only divorce his wife if she has been unfaithful or if she was not a virgin at marriage. Fearing that Sara would bring this absolute worst shame upon herself and the family, the family went out and explained the reason for Sara's return home. The truth was that Malik's psyche could not handle the great strain he had been through in a short time, as well as the hot climate, so he could not fulfill his marital duty on the first wedding night. The couple sought help quickly, and the doctor tried to calm them by saying it would pass fairly quickly and that it was a temporary stress not uncommon among newlyweds. The couple had agreed that they would unite as soon as Malik was well. But what happened broke Malik, and he judged himself socially dead and thus would never return to Midyat with such a shameful reputation.

Malik was able, in one way or another, to convince her to continue the journey to Germany, but he chose to become well first. His foolish act of leaving her with her parents started a prolonged dispute that could drag on indefinitely in Midyat. On one side stood Malik's relatives with a few families on their side, claiming to have the right on their side, and on the other side, Sara's relatives with an equal number of families claimed they had the absolute right on their side. The judicial authorities and clergy stood completely powerless. The quarrel concerned whether the marriage had been consummated or not. Who should pay the costs related to the engagement and wedding? Whether the marriage should be broken was a central topic of discussion. Furthermore, there was debate about whether she had the right to keep the gold jewelry. On the other side was the girl's honor and future, possibly destroyed. The rumor mill took off like a rolling snowball through every corner and edge where more than two people gathered, and threats, assaults, the temporary priesthood, right or wrong, judged Malik guilty on all counts. Police reports from both sides followed one another. The whole thing ended with Malik's relatives threatening that whoever would marry Sara during the conservative period must pay the costs.

It had been more than a year, and the parties had buried the hatchet. At that time, Sara was around nineteen years old and still beautiful, but as an unfortunate woman whom men could not tolerate. There had been one or two strangers who wanted to propose to her but backed off when they heard about the situation surrounding her.

One of Malik's relatives, Danno, who no longer saw beyond his own nose, had his own conclusions about the whole matter. Danno wanted the gold back or at least part of it that Malik had bought for her. As soon as Danno saw Sara adorned with so much gold, he became more and more determined to take the gold from her. If her family did not return the gold voluntarily, he would take it by force. Danno assaulted Sara's brother and threatened to kill him if he did not bring the gold to him. Danno himself was later threatened by a hired criminal, so he stopped with his threats, but Danno's scheming was not over.

In utmost secrecy, Danno planned a coup against Sara to deceive her at an opportune time and rob her of her jewelry. He had hired some malicious young men for a targeted operation against her. Sara's neighbors had a wedding, and most likely Sara would be there late in the evening when the wedding procession would go to the bride's house. On the way, they would pass through a narrow alley where Danno's accomplices would attack her, tear off her gold jewelry, and disappear quickly. The criminals would sneak among the wedding guests at a suitable moment. At a given moment, one would shoot out the only streetlight so that the entire alley would be plunged into darkness. This would create panic among the guests, and at the same time, some of the bandits would hold Sara in their grip while Danno himself would pick every piece of gold she had on her.

Danno postponed his plans until the day before the planned attack, fearing the risk of being recognized was too great and that he could receive a severe punishment for this. At the last moment, he was stopped. In the end, Sara had to flee society to be able to marry. Everyone involved in the affair is now married, has children, and is hopefully happy—but not Danno.

Ahmed rents out his bride to Ako (Page 154)

Yakob was an orphan boy from Kerboran. During the Seyfo period, he lost his parents and was taken care of by adult relatives and a kind-hearted Kurdish family until he was able to return to his parental home. He spent his childhood as a Muslim in the village of Halila and at adulthood became Christian in his home village Kerboran. Yakob went under the name Ako Ida. Ako lived his life and moved away from internment during World War II to Syria where he served as a French mercenary. He returned to Midyat a period to finally settle in the parental home in Kerboran. Ako had experienced events and had been part of much during the journey.

In the 1950s he opened a textile shop in Kerboran with close contacts to Midyat and therefore Ako felt partly from the city. He was literate, wise, social, humorous and a very pleasant person. In his dealings he came into contact with a broad range of people.

Ako had one of his childhood friends from Halila named Ahmed. Ahmed ran a similar business in his home village and was a little slow and forgot easily, especially his debts. Ahmed had a Seyid lineage (Seyid: prophet's descendant), grew a large beard and liked to always talk about his faith and his deep relation to religion with all its goodness. His favorite topic to talk about was his belief about life after death with young virgins, which Ako drove and joked with him freshly about.

"You have difficulty remembering what the fabric that you bought a while ago cost, how can you then handle 40 women—HURI around you?" asked Ako. "Sure I can do that. In the next life we are reborn of angel form with fresh memory." "Oh, that I didn't know, health then?" "Also of divine power." "Do you mean that you will be reborn as a stallion?" "Yes, something in that style but in male form." "But how will you handle a whole herd of young girls in your harem?" "I will name every single one a name and it is just to call a name." "Yes.....? Yes....." Poor Ahmed lived surely in a difficult period of "old man's disease" (lust) and thought went in idle.

Ahmed came one day to Ako to shop and picked a little of each, he didn't have enough cash. He was not allowed to shop on credit while he and Ako discussed the payment hectically the congregation imam passed by. After a long discussion about credit and payment guarantees Ahmed agrees to leave one of his heavenly brides in Ako's care until he comes with the debt. In the imam's presence Seyid Ahmed thus gives one of his 40 future heavenly brides away to the Christian Ako against a debt on a number until he regulates the debt. The imam and Ako know each other and drive jokes with Ahmed and wait for his reaction.

After a few days Ahmed comes rushing with his debt to pay and liberate his bride. "No," says Ako, "I don't want the money and I don't leave the woman back." "Sure you shall leave her whatever happens." "No, I refuse." "You have promised to do it and you shall keep your promise," says a disturbed Ahmed. "Why shall I leave her? Do you not see how fresh and healthy I look since you lent your beautiful bride to me?" "It shows on you. Cursed Ako, you may not keep the bride, not a moment longer. You are furthermore Christian and it is not suitable that you shall have 'Huri' in your possession." "No... You don't get her back, she is my dear nowadays." "Can you shut up and stop saying my dear? She is in your custody only."

While Ahmed presses Ako to leave the girl back some customers come in and Ahmed interrupts the conversation and takes straight way to the imam who was present when they made the deal. Without wasting more time he asks the imam to plead his cause with Ako to get back his bride. "Dear Ahmed, I shall do my best to solve the conflict between you and Ako, but it is also not possible to force him too much. We must convince Ako to voluntarily leave the bride." Ahmed takes out his purse and hands over a coin to the imam to take care of this for Ahmed extremely important issue and asks the imam to keep it secret. The imam considers it still calm to discuss the sensitive honor issue in private. A flapping happy imam comes to Ako and tells about the meeting with the deeply faithful Ahmed and the coin sum and asks him to drive on with the issue he pays for himself.

Early in the morning, according to agreement, Ahmed arrives at the shop with a whole load of goods. Not long after comes the imam, and the theater play's second act begins. "I would never leave the bride, Ahmed." "I would never leave the bride unless it was for the ruling imam's sake," said Ako. "Thanks, Ako," said the imam with reverence. After the imam and Ako have exchanged presents Ako renounces the saint girl that Ahmed had left to him. Happy and grateful the imam went home with good conscience, but the cackling with coming subject is often what one met on. Ahmed went home with good conscience.

THE THIEVES WHO GO FREE DESPITE WITNESSES – p. 157

Summer 1970, a beautiful July evening after the cafes had closed in central Midyat, a collection of youths wander through the streets in the quiet night to get home. The youths were completely unprepared to meet some armed thieves on the way home this early in the evening. It did not belong to common norms that youths moving in the central city in evenings should arm themselves, and it did not belong to commonalities that thieves should move in the community this freely.

The youths walk the road past the city's mosque and continue through the Saido district. Then they turn towards the Tjalma district, upwards towards the Nahrozo family and further past the Serti family's flour mill. The clock is around eleven at night and the youths stop and ask each other if they should end the day by saying goodbye to each other. No, not everyone wanted to go home. "It is too early," say some who do not intend to get up early in the morning.

The youths split up. Some of them turn left and the rest want to return the same way. The commotion becomes a little too loud in the quiet night, and at the same moment Uncle Circis Celebi goes out on his balcony towards the street to see what the youths were up to. This late in the evenings the youths refrain from being loud right outside Uncle Circis' house, which is why they pull fast towards the Gubo Dhaklo-field well without thinking about why they do so.

At this point, only six youths are left and they talk quite quietly to not disturb the surroundings. The journey goes all the way to the Haklo well. It is dark and dead silent. The youths start the journey to return homewards, but suddenly the district's dogs begin to bark. There are strange people in the area and the dogs smell the scent. The youths think in the beginning that it is normal dog barking and do not care much about it, but the more intense it became the more worried the youths become.

Arriving at Hobil Shammo Sahjo's house the youths stop, hide below the rock cliffs and listen if there are any strangers hidden in the fig garden just below the community. Fikri Sharro notices some moving among the fig trees and urges his friends to be quiet and follow the thieves' movements. "Surely there are thieves," whispers Fikri to his friends. The youths split up and block the thieves' escape route. Completely without thinking that the thieves can be armed Fikri attacks them with stones that he picks up on his way. The thieves are caught off guard and flee in panic to not be recognized.

The thieves are two known youths from the sparsely populated area but live in Midyat for the moment. One is named Nadim and attends the junior high school in the city, from where he moves in central Midyat and knows well the youths who want to meet him. The other is Mahme from the Saliha area, a professional thief with solid experience. The thieves have nothing else but to run away with all power. Fikri runs after Mahme down the rock cliffs towards arable lands, and Mahme feels cornered. He turns around and shoots straight above

Fikri's head. The plan was to bind the thief's hands and take him to the police. In the ensuing panic in the darkness Aziz Aydogan Basche runs after Nadim and disappears in the darkness!

He catches him in the middle of the street running out towards the Haklo well. Aziz is however strong. He flies at Nadim, wrestles him down and holds him under himself. Aziz tells his friends to get a rope to bind Nadim. Nadim calls on his thief buddy to come and free him. While Aziz wants to bind the thief he gets a powerful stab in the stomach. "Ah" he screams and falls down while holding his stomach. The cursed Nadim had a smaller knife hidden under the belt and while the youths were in the process of binding him he pulled the knife and stabbed Aziz in the stomach very badly. At the same moment his crony makes it back and shoots sharply straight at the youths from five meters distance and frees his companion. Panic-stricken friends take Aziz in express speed to the hospital for care.

Aziz survives but the physical and psychological memories of this fateful night do not let go of him. Police report and all attempts to bring the perpetrators to justice went no further. Despite young Aziz's visible injury and medical certificate and five witness accounts the police do not arrest the perpetrators.

HOOLIGANS IN THE PEOPLE'S SERVICE – p. 158

The genocide Seyfo 1915, the wealth tax that only Christian citizens were obliged to pay 1943, two years uninterrupted camp work in Anatolia, September 6-7 events in Istanbul, the "Miting" event in Midyat 1963 and the constantly terrifying, permanent general threat on the Christian people created generations of fear in the entire region. The fear was there and haunted as soon as one wanted to protest against injustices. The older generation was not late to remind of their bitter memories as soon as the youth wanted to raise their voice. The clergy's constant prophecies and the psychological brake for the youths not to revolt. But how long would this continue?

The youth had nowadays opportunity for education and thus also own perception of society from the free human's perspective. The youth began to give echo in the nearest villages with Anhil and other communities. The Arameans in Midyat had "grown skin" and this cast the centuries-old mentality about protector-slave Mzizah as example.

In the 1960s the common Christian family in the city had around eight children and job opportunities were not sufficient for this entire growing youth corps. Political injustices combined with unemployment made youths in hundreds leave the city for their livelihood in big cities. Kurdish youths fled the city for better life to a higher extent and this left a void behind. A group of teenagers from the upper part of Midyat began to move in groups in the central community and at different gatherings here and there. They could be out until late nights and observe the entire social life from their own perspective. Upper city's youths grew up completely homogeneously without fear of the others, and the few times one was in conflict with Muslim children they could be undefeated. Muslim youths who were forced to move in Christian quarters were forced to ask for the freedom to just pass by. This feeling of superiority grew up with age but it was limited to some quarters where they were

homogeneous. This territory dominion did not apply in the central city where the youths wanted to be more inclusive and widen their views.

Conflicts, large and small, belonged to everyday life in the multi-ethnic bazaars that people from near and far sought to do business. Fights arose here and there, sometimes about a trivial matter, and almost daily. Child and youth fights among Arameans ended with adults present dealing a slap to each side and pushed in separate directions so the matter was clear, simple and smooth.

If two Muslims fought with each other the fight could degenerate and magnify to a big fight with weapons involved. Christian citizens saw ten Arameans against one Muslim and one came out of the fight feeling absolutely not in a fight between Muslims. If they happened to be there they could, at most, try to separate the combatants.

If two Christians fought with each other there was not much to worry about, unless it was about serious matters. Refreshing curse words and empty threats could be heard from afar but often it ended with someone settling on the spot or after the service on Sunday, in the priest's presence, one forgave each other.

If a Christian and a Muslim fought then it was huge seriousness unless some peace-willing known gentlemen stepped in and averted the fight before it flared up. It could otherwise degenerate to a serious regular battle with one side's capitulation. On one side a Christian majority but with built-in fear against Islam's wrath and a legal fear that sat all the way into the bone marrow, and on the other side Muslims, a threatening shape that scared existence with its existence. One was forced to take sides in the conflict. It was ugly of a man not to help his Christian brother, at least save him out of the fight. If a Muslim was there he could act completely unthreatened as he pleased.

The city's youths who were also called "**Commando**" were not just troublemakers. Autumn 1967 the youths started a collection of basic food items from the rich in the entire city and shared to the poor. This "Robin Hood act" gladdened everyone involved, not least the clergy.

Several businessmen from Rishmil and Kabbala had begun to establish themselves with a new model within the grocery industry. In a short time they took a part of the market. Midyat's shops were closed Saturday afternoon, Sundays and holidays, but these Rishmil and Kabbala people were open every day and sold their goods a little cheaper than the established shops. It was not low-price goods that the commando youths were annoyed at, but to suddenly see so many shops open on Sundays. Working on weekends did not belong to the city's culture and many passing by raised their eyebrows. Suddenly there was something for the "hooligan gang" to cause trouble with.

The youths were out in the evenings and completely aimlessly wandered around cafes and cinemas, and on the way home they graffitied on the Rishmil people's shops and disappeared from there. In the morning there were laughing scenes when one saw the shop owners busy washing off their padlocks and cleaning around the shop entrances. This went on until some

of the newly started shops were forced to close their shops or move to safer places. The commando youths moved in packs around the center, and if fights arose between groups the youths flew at the counterparty, decided the match and disappeared before the police came to the spot.

One Sunday afternoon some of the youths were on a picnic at the Vineyards in eastern Midyat, and after some alcohol consumption the youths began to become loud and jumped and skipped in the terrain. Suddenly a businessman from the mentioned group, whom we can call Abdul, appears. The man holds the leash to his pack animal and slowly comes from the mountain's direction close to the youths. "Oh, do you see, what a coincidence?" says one of the youths and begins to pull in that direction, and the friends follow. The youths give the man humiliating epithets, kicks and deal slaps, and the man runs from there begging for his life. He goes home and tells his children about what he has been subjected to. One of his adult sons takes his revolver and goes after the youths, not to kill but to take revenge on the youths for what they did to his father. He had intended to fire a shot to scare away and chase the youths in the forest until they are forced to apologize. The youths were surprised and had no other choice than to run from there. The chase continued up the mountain, south towards Mor Abrohom monastery, and the youths split up to be able to surround him inside the monastery yard. The revolver man did not know the monastery area, which is why the youths lured him into the outer yard where hiding places existed. In the meantime another few youths had gathered and everyone began to go at the man with all power, so he had no other choice than to run for his life. He who chased the youths with weapon began now to flee from the same youth gang. The chase intensified on him in direction towards the city, and at the flour mill he turned north with the youths on his heels. They hid on the rooftops and attacked him with stones from their positions.

About thirty eager youths with aim to catch him. The exhausted revolver man stopped a little while to rest with the naked pistol in hand and threatened to kill whoever goes at him. He looked around with gaze on the gathered people, probably expecting someone to act and save him, but on the contrary the crowd pressed on him more threateningly instead. "Throw the weapon and lie down on the ground," shouted some. "Never leave I my weapon, let me go, I don't shoot," he answered. "Throw the weapon or I shoot you," screamed another from one of the rooftops from the other direction.

The man became afraid, waved with his weapon and began to run up the street at the height of the main gate to the Ibrahim Sharro family. Fikri Sharro throws himself on him like a leopard and overpowered him in a second. The man was chased with blows and kicks after disarmament up the street out of the city and further all the way to the regiment's watchtower where he surrendered beaten up to the military police. The seized revolver was kept for the moment with Ibrahim until the perpetrators would make themselves known. But for fear of being punished for weapon possession Abdul reported neither the robbery on him nor the assault to the police. The city's hooligan youths did furthermore not gladly want to end up with the police force.

Except those who followed the chase on the streets the whole city knew of the day's riot. But not a peep from any of the parties who wanted to keep it as an affair between them. After several months Abdul with his family visited the Zafaran monastery in Mardin where they asked the monk Gabriel Allaf to fetch the seized weapon from the hooligan youths. Some men from Rishmil in company of the monk visited Ibrahim Sharro and apologized for the son as a boy having threatened Midyat's youths. A proud Ibrahim invited the company to their home for dinner and returned the weapon. After this event the hooligans began to get more respect from Midyat's establishment and felt more worthy. The hooligans became subsequently the people's protectors.

Students from the villages around Midyat moved to the city. In connection with the high school's founding in the city a dozen had arrived. After a few days, one sees many foreign youths out on the streets walking with prayer beads in hand, jacket over shoulder and walked unhindered toughly on the street. "Some tough guys," were the first comments. But as long as they behaved, one did not stop them from showing themselves tough on the streets.

They were called the students, came from the countryside but belonged to well-to-do families. Some had their friends in the city and socialized with each other, but a group of them distinguished themselves more than others. Tall fine guys in suits with white shirts and ties who gathered at cafes and kindly greeted everyone around and treated freshly. The youths were the clan leader family Tchelebi's boys from Mzizah and spoke Aramean without accent so one could not distinguish them from other youths except that they showed themselves to be more wealthy than the others. The youths behaved cynically and spoke in an arrogant way with their surroundings.

On weekends the city's youth used to walk on the pedestrian street towards Estel, and the Tchelebi youths walked in a group and spread out provocatively so that meeting people were forced to move. What was foreign to the city's social culture and tradition was that some people bowed to these Tchelebi lineage youths when they met. Having the jacket over the shoulder and a prayer bead in hand was a sign for the surroundings to submit to these intruders. An Aramean young man had been told to move in the cinema for some of the Tchelebi boys to see the show from a better direction.

Another time another of the youths named Favzi screamed loudly at some sitting in the cinema to keep quiet. Kaya dbé Natiko sat there and felt offended and shouted back. "Why do you scream like that?" "Keep quiet so we can see the movie." "Who gave you the right to scream at us so rudely?" "Wait there, I am Favzi Tjelebi," said the man and expected an apology from Kaya. "How can you behave like this towards me, you uneducated human!"

Kaya tried to go at the man but he was told that he gets beaten if he doesn't leave the cinema fast. "If you can't tolerate others you can disappear from here." Kaya was brother to the legendary Shefik who became martyr during military service. Trial of strength during an evening when all Tchelebi youths were gathered on the street with clubs to surprise the enemy with a quick settlement. Kaya would not leave the cinema fast. Kaya with his friends planned to fight against Favzi and his gang. Staying in the cinema one could not choose.

Kaya wanted to make a better plan. Like in 1942, Kaya with his friends planned to gather fifteen strong youths equipped to create darkness at the same time as the Midyat youths would beat up the enemy quickly and effectively. Sneak into the machine room and turn off the electricity, lay the whole hall in total darkness.

On a Sunday morning Kaya gathered ten selected of the "commando patriots" and presented his plan. The youths jumped up with joy because they themselves thought of a similar action but didn't know when and how. Shortly before the show everyone was gathered outside the cinema and after a quick briefing the commando youths divided into groups with two in each group and sat down a little anonymously. Never before a such coordinated and violent action. They were not even used to people contradicting them. The Tchelebi youths were there and sensed something but had never imagined such an action.

In the middle of the total silence a loud bang was heard and the entire hall was laid in total darkness. The youths followed quickly like cobras on their determined prey with blows and kicks. They had instructions not to beat to kill. The slogan went "beat up but don't kill". The victims were left lying and finished treated for patching up. The youths were gone with other cinema guests who ran out in panic. The entire action didn't take more than a few minutes and then everyone disappeared smoothly without having time to reflect on what had happened. The event had created a big echo not only in the city but in the entire region. Tchelebi's youths did not show themselves on the streets for more than two weeks. They were ashamed to show themselves with bandages around the body and the whole tough behavior was transformed into submission and henceforth they stood in suitable line.

Some youths from Estel took offense at what had happened and they wanted to take revenge for what their Muslim brothers were subjected to, and some Midyat residents were indeed harassed in the cinema in Estel. The commando guys were not late to do the same thing. For a whole month youths from both sides were careful not to visit each other's cinemas. One day the commando youths got advance information that a large group of youths from Estel would come to Midyat. And in the evening in front of the same cinema they would join forces with Tchelebi's youths to cause trouble with anyone who would come in their way. The commando youths organized about thirty fighters and marched towards Estel for a trial of strength. The distance between the districts is two kilometers and Midyat's youths walked silently in total darkness more than half of the way. It became a direct hit and poor Estel's youths were disappointed. They met tens double as many as they had counted on, and furthermore not in front of the cinema where they could get help from the police and all Muslims who would suffice to be there. "Stop!", shouted the commando leader in front of his line. Estel youth were completely caught off guard and some quiet protests were heard from the counterparty. "Is there anyone who can speak for the group, come forward", commanded the commando leader. "We are going to the cinema, you may not stop us", answered one from the other side with a pleading voice. "You have harassed and stopped our youths the other day and therefore you may not come to Midyat anymore", said the commando guys. "No one may violate our freedom", said the man from the other side. "Here you! I don't see you in the dark, why don't you come forward?" said the commando leader and took fighting position himself in the

middle of the street. It became quiet a little while. Some in the middle chatted with each other and slowly a tall thin guy stepped out of the line and approached the middle. Without saying a word a commando guy followed on him with a bang under the jaw and a refreshing curse word. Hell broke loose. Lightning fast the commando youths attacked the other gang with fist-sized stones all the way to the outskirts of Estel.

At this time there were two Muslim families that distinguished themselves most in the community. It was the Shekho family with 7-8 well-built strong siblings and the Saadatke family, also with 7-8 well-built strong siblings. These boys played a little tough in the city center but despite the tough attitude the youths behaved well towards their neighbors and they were respectful towards their surroundings and society. Otherwise conflicts rarely arose between original city dwellers in Midyat. Everyone needed each other's services more than to hate each other. Christians and Muslims lived mixed and there were no purely Christian or Muslim quarters. Except occasional troublemakers among strangers who were prone to fighting plus the Muslims in Muslim quarters. Everyone showed respect for each other with exception of these fights with stones, batons and other assortments involved from the sparsely populated area visiting the city daily. Here history has not witnessed a single fight in the city with fatal outcome.

IN MIDYAT'S MODERN HISTORY, ABDUCTION OF WOMEN – p. 164

The city's history until the great flight did not witness a single respected woman abducted. A case had however become known in the beginning of the 1960s when a Christian woman had fallen in love with a Kurdish boy but the boy's family opposed and the woman in question was forced by the abductor's family to return to her family.

Hadji thinks it is blasphemy (Haram) to greet Christians. A group of gentlemen from Midyat built the city hall in Gercus municipality, "Kfargawze" in Aramean. These gentlemen were general specialists within the construction industry. Normally one worked on piecework, and this was a state construction project which according to agreement with the contractor the municipality inhabitants provided food and lodging for the workers. In turn every family would treat these Christian workers to three meals, and every Saturday afternoon the work team came home to Midyat over the weekend to return to their job early Monday morning. The distance between home and work was about four hours brisk walk, and there were no other alternatives. The workers had fun together, and the risk of being robbed on the roads was minimal.

One Saturday afternoon the work team was to eat at clan chief Bedreddin's and later come to their homes. Bedreddin was father-in-law to Nuri Aziz in Midyat, and he had good contacts with Midyat's Arameans. He was engaged in the construction project and ensured that the workers would move freely in the community. A warm spring Saturday after work the gentlemen were invited to fine dinner at the chief's, and after the food they would rest a while and drink a cup of tea before departure to Midyat.

In the middle of the fun tea break with the chief some foreign guests appear in the large living room. The newly arrived guests were not known to the Midyat residents, but their sight reminded of religious occupation with beards and headgears. One of them drew a little more attention through his huge headgear which was tipped with a green piece of fabric at the crown. In respect for the newly arrived guests, and as is customary, everyone stands up, welcomes the guests one by one and leaves room for them.

After a short while of greeting and please-sit-and-how-are-you phrases everyone sits in their places and looks around. The man with green skullcap asks a surprising question to the chief about the Midyat guests' doings, their identity and origin. The chief answers briskly that the sitting guests are a worthy group of professionals from Midyat building the school. "Oh well, are they Christians?" "Yes... they are Christians," answers the chief. "I didn't know they were Christians when I came in, otherwise I would never greet them," said the uneducated religious man completely rudely. "You came in yourselves and greeted us all, and we answered your greeting as is customary, what is it you are saying, Hadji?" said the chief. "Yes, of course we greeted everyone in the room, but these people are not worthy of God's greeting." "Stop, stop now Hadji! This was not friendly," snapped Bedreddin. "I don't go along with this. I want my God's greeting back." "No, I am not leaving," says the Hadji. Bedreddin became a little angry at the man but he didn't want to ruin the fun atmosphere at the same time as the Midyat guys on the other side of the room were about to explode with anger over the stupid man's humiliation of them. A heated bickering arose in the room at the same time as everyone waited for the chief's comment, for it was extremely unusual that a human behaves in that way towards guests. Even if a person has an inhuman attitude towards Christian people one usually doesn't behave in such way.

In the middle of the tumult the stonemason Malak Bagani from Midyat asks for the floor and the chief lets him take the discussion with the Hadji. "Well, Hadji," begins Malak softly. Hadji answers a little half-heartedly, and Malak continues: "You came in and greeted us yourself and now you say that we shall return your greeting. In what way shall we do this?" "Well, you shall, or you all shall go up and say loudly in front of the whole assembly that the greeting I conveyed to you returns to me in its entirety." "Have you not been in Midyat, Hadji? There everyone is Christian." "Yes, I have been in Midyat but that was before my pilgrimage to Mecca."

Some of the seated asked Hadji to cut it out but Bedreddin wanted Malak to continue driving with Hadji because this was a little funny thought Bedreddin, so he nodded at Malak not to stop. Hadji became more excited by the grumbling and became even more coarse in the mouth. Malak rose and stood in the middle of the room and asked the Hadji to rise and come towards him to regain his greeting. Malak was a stonemason so his body consisted of a mountain of muscle, a little short in stature but like a powder keg. He pulled up his shirt sleeves and took a turn around himself in the room. Around the large room sat more than twenty old men leaning against the wall with feet under them in meditation position and everyone was ready to carry out the little ceremony. Hadji stood there in the middle of the room, upset by the great sin and curious, waiting for Malak's action.

Among shoe piles by the door his headgear ended up on the other side. Malak took a proper run-up and dealt the Hadji a powerful thump with open hand. Hadji's false teeth flew like a UFO all the way out into the corridor. He looked upwards a little while as if he waited for a God's command. He fell in the tumult in the arms of the chief. Hadji himself was knocked backward and fell like a sack of potatoes in the arms of one of his friends. "Stop, stop!" shouted the chief and hit with his cane against the floor. "Sit down everybody! Hadji wanted his greeting back and the man gave him it according to Midyat's current rules," continued the chief. "Is that how one returns a greeting back in Midyat?" asked one of those present. "Sure, exactly as Malak did. These gentlemen are from Midyat and such is the tradition there," answered the chief. Everyone stood there and stared at each other with a lump in the throat, ready for a fight, but the chief commanded everyone to sit down since the greeting was back as it should be and according to Hadji's request.

TELEGRAM WITH UNNECESSARILY MANY LETTERS – p. 167

Malke Pitika, originally from the village of Kfarze, was a successful businessman during his time. Malke married a woman from Midyat in the 1970s and lived still in the city with his splendor. The great flight's whirlwinds took him along, and after a time of wandering around several border crossings within Europe he ended up alone in southern Stockholm among many other countrymen.

After a short time in Sweden he got residence and work permit, and he had all the world's right to fetch his wife to the new country. Malke wrote a telegram according to all literature's art rules and shot himself to a post office to send it in express speed to his waiting wife in Midyat. He wanted to inform her to go and acquire a visa as well as complete some business concerning the family.

Malke's Swedish was not enough to communicate with the postal official, and therefore he takes his friend Yakob with him to help him. Once at the post office the cashier shows how one sends a telegram abroad. She explains to them in easy Swedish and refers to a telephone booth right next to it. From there one would send the telegram via the telephone.

Yakob understands the right procedure and explains to Malke what they shall do. Malke is completely occupied with his thoughts and since he doesn't know the cashier's language he is totally dependent on Yakob. The cashier was to connect Yakob with a telegram receiver in Turkey, and Yakob therefore took place in the booth with the telephone receiver in one hand and the message text, which was written on half a page of paper with Latin letters, in the other hand. Close by, by the door to the booth, stands Malke with one foot inside. Disturbed hears the phone ring. Soon they were connected. A female voice on the other side takes over the matter and asks Yakob to spell the message, which Yakob grasped quickly. In Turkey one calls the letters by city names, S as Stockholm, M as Malmö etc. Yakob knows now what applies and begins immediately reading off the letters: "Samsun, Erzurum, Van..."

Malke pulls Yakob by the arm and whispers that the telegram should go to Midyat, not to the mentioned cities. Yakob hushes and covers the receiver and asks Malke to keep quiet, and

continues: "Mersin, İzmir..." Yakob continued spelling. "Damned telegram shall go to Midyat." When finished. Malke tries to the last to interrupt the conversation but Yakob slams the phone down. "Stop it!", shouts Malke completely furious. "You are not wise Yakob, it..." Careful Malke pushed out and asks him to stay out there until he is done left and alone inside the booth reads off the rest of the telegram and comes out.

Yakob went to the cashier and waited for Malke to come forward and pay. "It cost 46 kronor and 50 öre", said the cashier. Yakob thanked the cashier at the same time as he looked eagerly for Malke. "Where am I?", shouted Malke from the post office's exit, "but I don't pay a single penny." "Why not pay a penny?", asks Yakob. "My telegram would cost at most 50 kronor if it were sent directly to Midyat but you sent it through entire Anatolia and it will be much more expensive. Then you get to pay yourself", answers Malke. "No, Uncle Malke, I have only spelled the text as I was told to do. It won't be more expensive. Come now, the cashier is waiting for you." "No, I refuse! Can you say what it went to?" "Under fifty kronor, come." "I was afraid it would cost much more because it would wander through all of Turkey but if it is as you say then I shall clearly pay." A happy Malke paid for the telegram but could still not grasp why Yakob sent the telegram the long way through all of Turkey crisscross to finally end up in Midyat.

THE CITY'S BLACK CHAPTER – p. 168

Hundred years in well established high cultural lifestyle and the Christian Aramean city dwellers in clear majority, and in harmony with the Muslim neighbors, they set the city's socio-cultural agenda. The city had a multi... The great flight between 1975 and 2000 and under the prevailing anarchy in... ...everything served on a platter and they were still satisfied. In connection with the... most in sparse... relatives' women who were abducted... ...was exercised with violence a dozen Christian women by Muslims, they... ...death and were abducted by Kurds in the sparsely populated area. To protect... ...identity and with respect for those involved we do not want to mention... ...and forcibly Islamize...

The years between 1960 and 1975 can be called Midyat's golden years. During the period Christian citizens were... During the same... Midyat, (over sixty in... Clinical signs, the purpose was ethnic cleansing out... Period more than a dozen people were murdered just in... Turabdin. All crimes were committed with religious or... ...ing without warning.

The murder cases are still not solved and not a single perpetrator was brought to justice. Civilians, police, Ergenekon, *derin devlet* (deep state), JITEM, various Islamic murder cells were never imprisoned and punished. These cases in Turkish media are called "*faili meçhuller*" (crimes by unknown perpetrators). In all murder cases there are one or more suspects and all suspicions point to groups connected to the feared state. Where some names are mentioned, we chose not to mention some suspects here to not give false hopes to the relatives that the murder cases will be solved and those responsible brought to justice.

In the mid-1970s the Kurdish uprising against the state power began and this became the beginning of a new period that would affect city life in a negative direction. On one side

stood the state power with its allied Kurdish tribes whom the state armed and made into a civil militia with the pretext of protecting the people in the sparsely populated area. Officially these elements were called "*koruyucu*" (protectors or village guards). But it was not clear who they would protect against whom. It was an unholy alliance between them and the state to subdue their own citizens.

On the other side stood the Kurdish people's freedom movement. In the beginning a loosely composed movement of quite young boys that began to grow strongly. Sometimes these youths acted in frustration on their own. The group/party called themselves "*Apocular*" after the PKK movement's founder Abdulla Öcalan, Apo.

Summer 1975 a theater group came from Omid to play in one of Estel's outdoor cinemas. The theater piece was about a Kurdish young girl who served a retired Turkish officer family and about how badly she was treated as a human. Many youths gathered outside the cinema and a big fight started in the middle of the performance. Christian youths who were invited by Kurdish friends wound their way out of the premises and the fight through the back door.

After a few days the mayor's little brother Ferit Midyat escaped an assassination attempt and the event became a starting shot for regular battles on the streets between one side PKK and the other side the police with their armed militia. The idyll's sweet evening entertainments became a gangsters' arena for armed groupings. Cinemas and cafes closed before dark and he who lingered longer outside risked his life. The Aramean group was squeezed between the groups in conflict without the slightest influence or privileges. One felt completely outside the game but the Christians were neither forced to choose political side.

To crush the Kurdish uprising more effectively the state armed Islamists and let them loose in the community; pure murder patrols completely hardened, a dangerous group that shunned no means to reach their goal. It was relatively groomed appearance, short-cut hair with beard and always serious stone faces. When they met a Christian religious man on the street they turned their gaze away directly and spat on the ground to demonstrate their disgust. The man was not an immediate target but Christians were peaceful and class citizens who lived in fine houses and Christians were counted to third class in evil. He who did not fit the Islamists' ideal was just to eliminate. During this dark anarchy period over sixty Christian persons were killed in the region. Their only crime was that they belonged to the wrong religion.

UNSOLVED MURDER CASES – p. 170

Below follow some honorable persons who fell martyrs because they stayed in Midyat.

Barsaumo dbe Haydo from the village of Ardo was born in 1938. In adulthood he married Merame from Midyat and they formed a family in the city. Barsaumo was a smooth and well-behaved person and became father to a neat family according to the city's outstanding upbringing and all arts. In lack of work in Midyat he worked within the construction industry in the city of Antalya like most workers from the city who worked far away. Barsaumo with some Kurdish acquaintances lived in the collective in the factory's barracks. Under such

circumstances friendly relations arise within work teams and one is helpful towards each other. Barsaumo got the trust to manage the group's common food fund, and beside this he stood up for his comrades who needed help.

Late summer 1974 the northern part of Cyprus was invaded by Turkey and the nationalist hatred against Greece became again an everyday discussion topic in the country. The small group accommodation in the Antalya factory's worker barracks got its small share of the discussion. Barsaumo was the only Christian in the accommodation which is why he was careful with his comments and consciously avoided conflict in evil. Late summer the same year Barsaumo was to come to Midyat with the small money he had saved at the same time as he wanted to take a small break a few days from work. He also had hopes that the anti-Christian hatred would subside, at least from the barracks where he lived.

He felt singled out every time one heard the news on the radio, which he took to heart in the charged hatred against the Christian Greece. One in the group, as eager to annoy everyone, Aliko, was young with fanatic Turkish nationalist attitude. He was hot-tempered against Barsaumo but Barsaumo kept a low profile to not create conflict.

Barsaumo had saved some money and bought a new watch for his big boy, Elsa, and other small presents for his other children. The entire family in Midyat felt ill from the nationalist hatred. The day went to bathe, wash clothes and prepare for the journey. The cursed Aliko was swallowed by satanic thoughts to rob his Christian countryman of his savings. He had previously observed Barsaumo. Barsaumo moved uneasily during the last days and Aliko had discovered when he would strike. Time was short and Barsaumo was to take the bus home in the afternoon. Aliko pondered in his thoughts throughout the night about how and where he would shop for supplies for the collective and on the way there assault him. Aliko was a cowardly type and dared not challenge Barsaumo alone, man to man, and therefore he could not sleep all night the day before when he planned to lure Barsaumo to a smaller community nearby to carry out the planned deviltry.

Aliko had tested himself against Barsaumo for fun to test him, but Barsaumo was built like a mountain of muscle and could squeeze the juice out of Aliko. "Good morning Uncle Barsaumo," greeted Aliko. "Good morning young man. How alert you look this morning!" "Well, it is rest day and everyone is happy." "Happiest am I actually. Tomorrow morning at this time I am home with the family. I haven't seen the children for several months. Did you see what presents I bought for the children?" asked a happy Barsaumo. "Yes. We will miss you, actually." "No then, I am back soon, you won't have time to miss me." "Yes, you are always loved, Uncle Barsaumo. Don't take offense when we talk hard about the Greeks, on the contrary, we will protect you if you feel threatened." "Thanks Aliko, we Christians are durable by ourselves and have a seventh defense sense." "Here you go, uncle, I thought of going to the farmers' market and shop some supplies, can you come along?" "No, unfortunately I must make it to the bus." "Yes, you will make it surely, you have the whole day."

After a while of begging by Aliko for company Barsaumo dressed and the gentlemen climbed up on a truck bed and traveled to the market. The car trip would take a few minutes and thereafter another few minutes walk to the market. Towards the afternoon the workmates were to say goodbye to Barsaumo who was going home, but he never showed up. Strangely enough, even the luggage was gone. Could Barsaumo have traveled home without saying goodbye to his comrades? No, this was not like him. To supper Aliko didn't come either. Strange! Can they have traveled home together? Or did they miss the bus and drift in the city? It became bedtime but neither Barsaumo nor Aliko showed up. The comrades became very worried. Their fear became even greater when they discovered that the collective's large kitchen knife was gone. Lord God! This is frightening, but no one dared speculate. At work, Barsaumo was officially on vacation, but Aliko was gone without notice. However, no one missed Aliko.

A shepherd found a human body in the forest. The police were immediately alerted, and after a short investigation, it was determined that the body was that of a male non-Muslim person. The police quickly identified the body. Barsaumo's coworkers were questioned, and at first, they did not want to reveal what they had witnessed or name their comrade. But the Turkish police's harsh interrogation methods led the coworkers to tell everything about their actions and more. The military police from Gercus conducted a swift raid in the village of Binkelbe and arrested Aliko at his home. After a short period of denial, the confession came quickly and in detail.

On Sunday morning, Aliko had tricked Barsaumo into coming with him to the market. Before leaving, Aliko had taken a large knife with him without anyone noticing. They rode on the car roof, and near the marketplace, they got down to walk the rest of the way. The cursed Aliko was about to carry out his evil deed cold-bloodedly. "Here we go, no, that's the shortest way," and Barsaumo became worried and stopped for a moment. "No, I'm starting to get confused, can you go ahead, uncle?" said Aliko with a trembling voice. Somewhat hesitantly, Barsaumo quickened his pace through the narrow path in the bushes, and Aliko took the lead behind him. He looked around and saw that there was no one alive nearby. Aliko was completely silent with fear that Barsaumo might escape the place of death and how he would manage to get out of his claws if Barsaumo turned around. The knife was sharp enough to go through the ribs and tear the victim's artery. He felt it. Aliko put his hand in his pocket and felt the sharpness of the knife. With his burning hatred, he took a run, holding the knife's handle in his hand, and with human strength, he stabbed Barsaumo in the back. A cold sweat shower of fear came over him when he... "You're a damned traitor," Barsaumo cried out with death agony. He threw his back at his executioner, and both fell into the ditch. Barsaumo had been stabbed a minute earlier. He took his wallet and bus ticket and dealt some blows to the head and whatever else he could manage. He no longer resisted and sank to the side and disappeared from life. Stressed, Aliko approached his coworker and the man he called a friend. He washed his bloody hands and took Barsaumo's... Dark towards the bus stop. Thanks to Barsaumo's relatives... ..came to the barracks. Days and nights of hard struggle to bring the murderer to justice, Aliko was arrested and... ..bound to prison for premeditated murder.

Abdelmesih Inisko Varli

Abdelmesih was born in 1917 and lived in the district of Saidovat. In his old days, he took care of the family's dairy animals. Early in the mornings, they milked the sheep and then herded them a bit along the open field a few hundred meters away to the large flock. In the evening, the sheep were brought home as usual. Abdelmesih and his wife lived alone in their house. The family was financially well-off and was not dependent on the income from the livestock; they had this activity as a hobby.

A shepherd, whom we can call Nuri, had worked on the family's farm a few years earlier. At the time of the incident, he lived in the same district and knew both the Abdelmesih family and every door and window in their yard well. It was midsummer, and the sheep were outside at night. Abdelmesih slept in the small hall with the door to the yard ajar to hear the animals' creaking and chewing. Nuri had planned to rob the family and take their sheep. The devil's errand boy Nuri had planned the robbery in detail with two like-minded accomplices. The robbery was to be carried out at midnight when the streets were quietest and the tired farmer was sleeping deeply. Around three in the morning, Muslim prayer callers shouted loudly nearby, and the whole district woke up. The robbers had to complete their coup and secure the loot before dawn.

On the fateful late summer night of 1972, Nuri was to climb over the two-meter-high wall into the yard and then open the front door from the inside to herd the sheep out through the door toward the forest as if they were his own. If Abdelmesih woke up, he would fire a warning shot to scare him back into the house and abort the robbery. Nuri and his accomplices would thus never be exposed. "Shoot to kill rather than be caught," was the plan.

At midnight, Nuri and his two accomplices came and checked the street. It was empty, and without delay, Nuri jumped into the yard and slowly opened the front door from the inside so that his accomplices could take care of the sheep. Nuri himself climbed back up the wall with a loaded rifle aimed at the hallway entrance where Abdelmesih slept deeply and snoring. The accomplices quietly herded the sheep out and took them away. Suddenly, the snoring stopped. Nuri whispered to his accomplices to stand still. But Abdelmesih woke up. The cursed Nuri was seized by panic, ran out into the yard half-awake with his baton, and attacked. Nuri fired a shot at close range directly at Abdelmesih. Abdelmesih was hit in the chest and fell backward lifeless into his pool of blood, dying instantly. The criminals left their loot and fled into the darkness like cowardly jackals before being shot at by Abdelmesih's neighbors. Despite several clues pointing to a criminal network, the police could not arrest anyone for the crime. The police did not really care much about the incident. Rumors strongly indicated an Aramean man who was the brain behind the robbery since similar criminal activities did not belong to commonalities during this time and in the densely populated community, unless there were safe sources that showed the way for the thieves. Nuri with his cronies participated actively in the funeral ceremony close to the relatives and cried at the dead's coffin more than several others. Probably Nuri was remorseful and his conscience chased him all his life.

Ilyas dba Naoum (Göksu)

Ilyas went under the name Yaso in Midyat. He owned a printing press in the city during the 1970s and published the newspaper "Midyat Postasi" twice a week. The profession was not common and very modern for the time, but Yaso was a generally educated person and quite knowledgeable in his professional practice. Yaso moved among the city's officials and other high celebrities, and in his spare time he was often on bird hunting. He with some comrades had a hunting team that functioned well.

A weekday in 1984 Yaso and school principal Avni were to go out on bird hunting. The evening before they made an appointment. They were to gather at Avni's and from there they would set off all together. Avni lived for the moment on the upper floor in Gello dba Gorgis' farm in the northern district. Around three in the morning Ilyas knocks on the front door carefully and Avni opens the front door slowly and invites Yaso into the yard. The friends must hurry to reach hunting grounds before sunrise. "Come in, I will quickly boil a cup of coffee," says Avni. "No, brother Avni, I have coffee in my small coffee thermos," answers Yaso. "Yes, we skip that then, but come in until I get dressed."

The minute after Yaso gets shot with a coarse lead bullet straight through the stomach. He manages to walk himself the stairs down to the street and sits there waiting for help. Shaba dba Maksialyas is a baker. He is a little late to his job which is why he walks in running pace. Approximately at the same time he hears, two hundred meters from the place, a gunshot salvo. Shaba stops and considers returning but after a moment's consideration he continues to his job. At the height of the place he notices a human shadow sitting a few meters away. Shaba does not see well and it is moreover still a little dark on the horizon. He gets properly frightened by the shooting. "Can you help me?" answers Ilyas. "Hello there!" shouts Shaba with a little trembling voice. Shaba recognized the voice and hurried as fast as he could towards Yaso. "Lord God, Ilyas, what are you doing here at this time?" "Take me to the health center fast," said Ilyas with the palm pressed against his side to stop the bleeding. "What has happened to you, my friend? I am shot, here on the side," he said and pointed towards the injury. "Who has done it?" "Don't ask now. If I survive I know who has shot me," he answers shortly.

At the same moment Avni comes down very stressed and without uttering a word they lift Ilyas on their shoulders and carry him to the center. From there Avni takes the shot man with a car to the hospital in Batman. After an hour the car returns to Midyat with Ilyas' dead body. The case was never legally tested and the Midyat police declared it as an accident.

Ilyas was at his death a fifty-year-old balanced and wise human with high morals and religious conviction. He was shot straight in the stomach from short distance in Avni's bedroom. It must be Avni who held the weapon, if Ilyas was lured consciously into the bedroom to give the appearance of an honor case if it should be legally tested? Why he didn't want to name the murderer and if the fatal shooting was a conscious action or an accident may go to history unanswered.

Hobil Shammosahjo, Beth Kashro

The Hobil family was one of the district's richest families, but since the son Isa had made bad business the family's economy went backwards during the later years. Uncle Hobil kept however his peculiar position in society. Hobil was a generous and helpful person who always took the initiative in many issues. Hobil with his wife lived in the newly built farm on the outskirts of the community. Their farm was not finished and therefore Hobil was extra vigilant about his house. At this time the city of Midyat had lost its sense of security and after sunset anarchy took over instead of law and order on the streets. One could hear shooting here and there all nights.

A dark autumn night in 1988 the dog began to bark violently which is why Hobil woke up without making any noise. He took his shotgun which was ready to fire and hung on the wall. He approached the window to look around. The family's livestock were locked in the stable and there should not be anything with them. The thieves would not be able to access them but some prominent persons could move out there. To his surprise he saw by the window the fig tree. Hobil approaches there to see if he could recognize someone, in the glow no one should walk around out there. In the dark Hobil approaches carefully and sees a human figure three meters from him on the outside of the window. He lifts up his rifle to shoot but he hesitates. Shall he shoot to kill or to scare away the thieves? At the same moment the wife rushes towards him unaware of what is going on. He gestures to her to keep quiet but she interprets the message wrong and the thief comes a little closer. Hobil rushes towards the lighter and turns on the room's lamp. Hobil screams at her to go fast but it was too late. The thief had seen Hobil clearly from his sight through the window. The bullet bored through. Hobil tried to extinguish the lamp fast but the thief stood with ready-to-fire weapon in front of him and for fear that Hobil would shoot first he lifted his weapon. He took Hobil's weak body and hurled him towards the floor in a pool of blood. Some flee like terrified dogs without taking anything with them. Given the anarchy in society one could suspect anyone and no one. The case is not solved yet.

1943 in the middle of war and poverty, the State taxed the citizen with an invented excise tax (wealth tax - *varlik vergisi*) probably to finance Nazi Germany's war. Gorgis bar Denho's share of the burden was two hundred lira. This tax was for all citizens but Christians were to pay double compared to their Muslim neighbors, but what was laughable in this context was that the tax rate was applied by local county versus municipal authority which were corrupt all the way down to socks and acted according to own liking. Christians who could not pay were threatened with long forced labor but since Gorgis was at high age the risk for this was not imminent. The family's adult sons were in labor camps.

And the older Gorgis did not have the possibility to pay the adjudicated tax in the middle of famine when the family didn't even have food for their survival. What kind of wealth tax the family was judged to pay the family did not understand. The deadline expired and Gorgis could not pay his debt. Two bailiffs in the company of two military police came to the farm to make distraint of the family's household implements. The bailiffs went into the house trampling with their boots and waving with batons pushed Gorgis, the women and the children aside. Civilians dressed bailiffs picked the household's "luxury goods" out onto the

yard. The family's all chattels were valued at just over a hundred lira, and to pay the rest of the debt Gorgis would perform slave labor. All this went on without the family understanding a word of what the bailiffs said because they couldn't speak Turkish. Before they started fighting the women stood crying in a corner. Hobil walked from the yard, horrified over how the bailiffs behaved. Hobil interrupted the confiscation, paid the entire sum and saved the family from the bailiffs' violence. Of course the family regulated their debt to Hobil with great gratitude and paid the entire sum.

Ilyas Cakici

The family **Mnaalono**, also called **Baitar** (veterinarian) originates from the ancient city Hasno d'Kifo and is well known for their profession in the entire region. A part of the clan fled to Midyat during the First World War. The family went under the name Yakubo dba Mnaalono and they lived in harmony. The eldest son Ilyas worked as a farrier and wandered from one village to another and visited farms, mostly west of Midyat, where the farmers owned most horses. Ilyas had his small workshop on the back of his horse and as a rule he left home Monday morning and came home on Saturday or every other Saturday depending on where he was during the week's last working day. Ilyas, like all professionals from the city, had high morals in his professional practice and was welcome wherever he traveled among the Muslim population. He lived his moderately wealthy existence.

A Friday afternoon Ilyas was in the village of Avena. While the adult men were in the mosque Ilyas rested with his horse in the shade under an acacia tree in the community's center. Some roaming youths had sought the shade and they began to bicker with Ilyas about the place. Ilyas didn't want to cause trouble with the youngsters so he took the horse's leash and moved towards the mosque direction. On the square he meets some men, greets them and complains about the youths' bad behavior, which later turned out to be wrong to do.

One of the men called the youths to him and dealt them some slaps for educational purposes. Three of the youth gang were best friends with each other and walked around in the small community without any occupation and money. The trio had plans to emigrate all the way to Beirut in Lebanon to get work, but they needed money for the trip. A few days earlier they broke into the Turkish school teacher's, but there was no cash. The event under the tree awakened the youths' interest to get quick money and run away from the community as fast as possible. The trio came up with robbing Ilyas of his business cash which probably would suffice for the trip and a little more. Ilyas was anyway a poor Christian stranger and the risk for retaliation was non-existent. But how and where would this be carried out? The trio decided to meet in the evening and plan the strike in detail. The evening's long discussion resulted in robbing Ilyas on the day he would travel home. The assault would take place far away in the forest and they would get away before the deed would be discovered.

Early in the morning Ilyas loads his horse. He had some supplies in the sack, among other things a pot of fresh butter that he exchanged for work. The crown on the load was anyway a rooster that he had bought and with which he wanted to surprise the children and the wife to slaughter and cook a good dinner. The trip home would take about five hours so he would be

home in good time to slaughter the rooster and he would have time to wash and rest before evening mass. Ilyas says goodbye to the host family and riding he whips his young horse with great longing for home. Ilyas riding alone has good time to think through his performed work during the last weeks. He takes out his small customer register and goes carefully through accounts, how much he has earned together and who owed him, and so he counts the cash one more time. Risk for assault at this time does not exist but still, thinks Ilyas, takes out his wallet, picks a bundle of large notes and hides them in a pocket in the load in case he is forced to hand over his wallet. After a while he is invisible to the community. The road towards Midyat goes through a path with meter-high bushes, but Ilyas knows the terrain well and everything goes as it should. The sun has risen a few meters above the horizon.

On an uphill slope Ilyas sees some people from afar following with fast steps. He doesn't have time to become suspicious. "Oh well it is the same youths who wanted to fight with me yesterday," he thought. "Stop, you cowardly old man, you don't escape from us!" shouted one of them. "This is no game," Ilyas has time to think quickly and turns to check carefully if the youths had firearms.

Ilyas had a strong stick in his hand and some tools loaded on the horse, among other things a heavy hammer that was close at hand. He steps down from the horse and stands by the load to defend himself against the intrusive youths. One of them runs in front of the horse and deals the poor animal a powerful blow with a stone in the head so that the horse was knocked to the ground by its heavy force and lay there pawing. Ilyas fights with all his power for his survival, but the youths crush him with stones and clubs very violently and disappear from there with the horse and parts of the load. If the robbers had planned to kill Ilyas or if the robbery went wrong and it ended as it did may go to history unanswered.

In the afternoon a passing shepherd notices the body and the villagers take care of Ilyas' remains. At nightfall a group of the villagers arrives with the dead body on a horse to the outskirts of Midyat. The entire city went out to help Ilyas' family in their deep sorrow. The family's longing for the father was transformed into a nightmare that extinguished the family's dreams for all future. The church that Ilyas longed for for the evening mass became his final resting place. The day after Ilyas was buried with a large ceremony in his church. They got rid of the horse, probably somewhere far away, and with their evil deed they took care of the horse and everything else they fled abroad. The murder of the farrier Ilyas Cakici was never solved.

Gevriye Bastug, Beth Grigo

Mort Schmuni church on the same street as the church. He was a small farmer. Gevriye was born in 1912, shortly before Seyfo. He lived two hundred meters north of most of the city dwellers and in his spare time he was a voluntary unpaid churchwarden. Gevriye owned a large field near the village of Karshaf where Hassanko from Karshaf had a field next to it and he considered himself having priority to the purchase. After a tough negotiation, the parties agreed on a certain sum. Hassanko paid a smaller part of it as a down payment and the rest he would pay during the coming year. Hassanko did not have money which is why the payment

dragged on in time, and Gevriye urged him openly: "The deal would be cancelled if Hassanko did not fulfill the agreement." Time passed, and the ongoing inflation meant that the year's harvest corresponded to almost half of the purchase sum. A fierce discussion arose about who had the right to the year's harvest and about the deal's validity. The whole thing ended with some laymen, and one shared the harvest at least this time, but one did not agree on the ownership of the field. Hassanko threatened Gevriye not to sell the field to anyone else, and therefore the relationship between Gevriye and Hassanko became very bad.

An early morning Gevriye began plowing his field. Suddenly Hassanko appears in furious speed from nowhere, and the fight between them was a fact. "It is my field, let me work," says Gevriye. "No, it is mine, I have bought it," answers Hassanko. "He who buys pays also, but it seems that you don't have money." "The deal is done. You get your money and you are forced to keep your promise." "You cursed, you haven't paid yet. I have deed to my field, and if you don't let me work I go to the police directly," explains Gevriye and pushes the uninvited guest out of his field.

Vengeful Hassanko leaves the place for a long while and comes back with an axe hidden behind his back, but he hesitates to attack from afar. Instead, he says to Gevriye: "Hi Gevriye, sorry that I was mean to you. We must agree in a friendly way." "Hi and welcome back," answers Gevriye, a little hesitant towards Hassanko's kindness, for this was not Hassanko's style to apologize. "Why would he be so kind?" thought Gevriye and withdrew a little and suggested meeting in the city after work. "Sure we can do that, but I thought of resting a while and at least treat you to a cigarette for my meanness." "Lord God, you were saved Hassanko." "Yes, finally I became aware of my flaws. It is never too late to apologize."

The treacherous Hassanko takes out his tobacco case, rolls a cigarette, stretches it forward to his "friend" and lights it at the same time as he turns half-sitting and takes a fist-sized stone and hits it with all his power against Gevriye's skull. With a loud scream, Gevriye sinks down. Hassanko grabs his axe and deals the lying Gevriye two blows around the neck. Gevriye dies immediately on the spot on February 12, 1978. The family reports the crime to the police and Hassanko is arrested. Finally, a criminal is arrested with hope that justice will be served. But before the trial even started to get going, Hassanko was released and the trial was ended. Later it became known that the defense lawyer had called in an older woman who was presented as Gevriye's widow and in court she appeared stating that she was with her husband when he was murdered and testified that it was not Hassanko who committed the murder. In this dirty game that "tricked" justice, Hassanko had an important actor and the affected family's assistant. This was a fifty-year-old Aramean man who had received power of attorney from Gevriye's widow to plead the family's cause. The man had received a sum of money from Hassanko's relatives and accompanied personally the false widow to court to convince the court's members that she was Gevriye's widow. The case was swept under the rug and Hassanko was thus acquitted.

Kerim Seven

Kerim was a teenage, lively boy from the Adoka family in Midyat. He was mentally ill and the illness had worsened his health with rising age. The family considered that he needed advanced care, which the family had arranged by admitting him to Diyarbakir hospital's psychiatric long-term care clinic. One night he escapes from his ward and disappears in the big city. After two days his dead body is found by the shore of the river Tigris below the city. Kerim had died as a result of blows with blunt object on March 5, 1986, but the body was buried without public medical statement.

Habib Un dbe Maksiyê dbeth Grigo

Habib was born in 1939. After work abroad he chose to return to his hometown to his father's house. Habib lived near a Koran school with some studying youths. Habib passed the mosque several times a day and was urged by "non-faithful" people to convert to Islam, which is always a religious task for every believing Muslim. The boy goes in to his teacher and urges him to educate the youths.

Habib was a guest worker in Germany and after several years he was a pleasant person, outspoken and joking with his surroundings. At the same time, he did not hesitate to criticize injustices. Near his residence, under the newly built mosque's auspices, a school had been started where the youths read their homework aloud. One of the boys stops one day and asks Habib if he wants to convert to Islam. The boy had surely learned this in the Koran school or been told by the Koran teacher to do this. Habib scolds the boy. A quarrel arises between Habib and the Koran teacher. Habib warns the teacher to be tolerant towards his neighbors. There arises a more heated quarrel. Police report is made against Habib and he is beaten by the youths once more. The day after some men gather outside the mosque on their way to a gathering. Habib approaches the crowd and discovers that he knows some of them whom he had ended up in conflict with the day before. A common older man from the Nahrozo family takes Habib by the arm and asks him to take it a little more carefully with the current teacher. The man's action was a covered threat to keep away from the school's area. The man had heard that if Habib would worry the youths one more time it would be his last discussion in life.

A few days later at another occasion Habib and the teacher ended up in a proper quarrel right in front of some men and it ended with the men stepping in and calming them both down. The cursed Koran teacher armed two youths and urged them to go to Habib who lived alone in the large farm. The youths would threaten some of them and use the opportunity to complain to them about the teacher. They threatened him with the weapons aimed at his neck and urged him to move from the district. If he did not become silent they would shoot him. Shortly before darkness fell Habib came home alone and a few meters from the door saw two completely strange persons slowly coming towards him. "Hi guys, whom are you waiting for?" "For you", answered one of them in Kurdish with serious tone.

Habib sensed the seriousness and hurried in to take his weapon which was ready to fire under the pillow but he was stopped on the inside of the yard. One of the youths puts his revolver against his head and threatens to kill him if he doesn't disappear fast from the city. Habib

strikes back with all power and swearing rushes up the stairs. A violent tumult arises in the stairwell and Habib frees himself and takes out his door key to get in. The confused gunman shoots from a few meters distance and the bullets hit Habib in the back. Loudly screaming he falls headlong on the ground. The man approaches him and cold-bloodedly shoots two more shots towards Habib's head. Habib is brutally executed in his home without any reason.

Neighbor Mhammadko hears Habib's violent quarrel followed by some shots, he rushes out towards the street where Habib has the door to his yard. In semi-darkness he sees two youths running out from Habib's residence towards the mosque until they disappear behind the corner. He suspected the worst because he had noted some threats from the neighborhood but that it would end in that way was not expected. Habib is murdered by the Koran school's students June 1, 1987.

Fehmi Yarar

Fehmi dba Shamun Haydo, born 1943, worked as a farrier with his brother Haydo. The family lived on their large farm in central Midyat. They had built a business complex next to their farm and had large incomes from premises rents. Fehmi with his family had their hands full dealing with their greedy tenants. To collect the rent on one's own was not so simple in the lawless business world. Fehmi was slightly epileptic which made him walk on medication. Even though physically he was a mountain of muscle, in the disease's slumber he spent time at cafes in the central city where large trials of strength were played out between Kurdish rebels and the state's extended arm the police with their henchmen. The political climate had reached boiling point and the idyll had been transformed into total anarchy. Despite the prevailing chaos Fehmi did not bow to injustices. He could protest loudly against those in power regardless of which side they belonged to.

One day Fehmi and a Kurdish tenant had fought a little about a delayed rent debt. During the discussion Fehmi gave the tenant a slap, but the neighbors intervened and the day after Fehmi reported the man to collect his debts. It turned out that it concerned large rent debts. The legal machinery was started with bribes and counter-bribes, threats of harassment and threats of eviction. Fehmi with his lawyer had won the first round in court and the rest was about days when they would evict the tenant or collect the rent debts.

Before coming court actions Fehmi meets his lawyer at the cafeteria around a cup of tea and fine-tunes his case. Then a policeman appears with two men and they want to talk to Fehmi about the dispute. The policeman takes Fehmi aside and probably threatens him to withdraw his report and let the tenant remain in the shop. What has been said between Fehmi and the policeman in silence is shrouded in obscurity. Fehmi comes home a little worried, exchanges a few words with the wife and then goes to the kitchen, eats a bite of food and takes his two-year-old boy in his arms to play with him. It begins to get dark and the last shopkeepers have closed their shops. One or another passes by on the street with their cloth bags in their hands. Fehmi goes to the outer door to lock it. "Soon the movie starts," shouted the wife from the window. "Sure, it was good that you mentioned it." "Will you take a watermelon with

you?" asks the wife before she closes the window pane. "Yes, I come shortly," he answers. Soon the TV series Dallas would start and the family used to gather in front of the TV.

Fehmi looks to the left and notices the policeman who had spoken to him a while before coming towards him at furious speed. Fehmi hurries to hold the door leaf in hand, looks out towards the street a little to the right and closes the door with the large latch but the policeman makes it there. "If it concerns the tenant I don't want to talk about it, but I refer you to follow along." "To the cafeteria over there?" says the policeman with angry attitude. Fehmi holds his ground: "...to my lawyer." "No, the lawyer has nothing to do with it, you shall withdraw your case." "Are you threatening me?" "Interpret it how you want, you cursed 'Gavur.'" "Go to hell you bastard!", says Fehmi and turns around with the son crying on the shoulder to slam the door shut. The wife is by the window a few meters further away and hears the quarrel but does not see the man out there. She comes out hurriedly to take the boy. Bang boom! Fehmi falls in front of her feet and the two-year-old boy is knocked down to the ground. The wife screams out of mortal agony and lifts up her boy but she cannot let the perpetrator flee unseen. She goes out and follows him until she sees the murderer go towards the street before he goes towards the police station.

The whole family rushes panic-stricken out into the yard and horrified observes the macabre sight in front of their eyes when Fehmi is drawing his last breath. He left his old mother, the wife and a crowd of small children in deepest sorrow. The policeman was arrested and the wife could point him out in picture and several times live, from all angles in the confrontation. The policeman lied in court and said that he was going to shoot a PKK terrorist and Fehmi came in the line of fire. The court sentenced him to a minor penalty for misconduct. To plan, complete and later sweep away the entire atrocity against a sick human required several conscienceless crooks' cooperation.

Malke Davud

Malke was a handicapped child of Davud and Sayde dba Kacho Circo Grigo and grandchild of Karim who went under the nickname "Temit". Karim descended from a well-to-do clan in the city of Midyat. The father Gevriye fled to the city of Adana during the First World War where the son Karim went to French mission school. In the 1920s Karim participated actively in starting the home for orphans in Adana with the monk Yuhanon Dolabani, officer Johanon Harun and many others. The school was the first official Assyrian national school and it went under the name "Kilikia Asuri okulu". Karim was a member of the school's board and used to tell freely about the students from Midyat like brothers Davud and Gabriel Assad, Abrohom Gabriel Saume, Johanon Salman, Ghattas Denho Makdesi Aljas and many others. Later the school was moved to Beirut and Karim followed. There in Beirut was started, with great effort and small resources, a branch to the school under the name "Tau Mim Simkat". Karim married the fellow student Saro with the blessing of the monk Dolabani. The young couple lived a time in the city of Aleppo where the son Davud was born. After a time the family moved to Midyat. Karim with wife Saro could read and write. He opened a grocery store in the city and life's wheel rolled with great hopes for a good future. But tragically enough the family did not go forward in time. Abroad trip at early age and two intelligent children made

progress. The couple got two healthy children who fled abroad. The other children were completely mentally handicapped with different diseases. Uncle Karim did everything for the family's survival and in the 1970s the family consisted of six persons. But within the course of a few years the entire family died out. The family's historical farm which was full of life and adorned the district once upon a time gaped suddenly empty and ghostly.

Malke, whom this section is about, was grandchild to Karim and completely mentally handicapped. He was over twenty years old but the family was forced to bind him to the bed. The night towards January 9, 1990 the mother forgets to bind him in the bed and he goes out, apparently in his sleep, and disappeared. Malke sets off towards the regiment completely unaware of what he was doing. Malke was barefoot, lightly dressed and fragilely hungry in the biting cold. The guard at the entrance to the large military facility warns from afar to shoot if he does not stop. After two warnings the guard shoots him down from a few meters distance. Malke actually walked with a heavy chain connected to his feet and he could not run. He was furthermore dressed in a large red dress which showed from afar that he was not a normal human. How the guard could miss all this and shoot him is an important question.

Note: (*Gavur* is a word that most Muslims call a Christian in Turkey. In Arab countries and Muslim North Africa the word "Kafir" is pronounced in singular and "kuffar" in plural. The word means infidel or pagan. The word is used as a slur also in Muslim countries. Muslims, especially in Turkey, call non-Muslim countries Gavur-countries, "gavur memleketi.")

Yakub dbe Lalo

Yakub dbe Lalo was not the best but he was an active participant in all contexts. He was born in 1911 and at this event he was around eighty years old. Yakub with wife Schmuni lived in the clan's large farm. The wife had her hands full managing the clan's remaining houses and arable lands which she managed with great care. Quite suddenly the Yakub Lalo family got such importance in the district. The society of terror had created many groupings competing with each other. Above all one of them whom we can call Hadji was extra uncomfortable. He used the time's power and evil with great skill. The neighborhood began to get annoyed at why he was so powerful with everyday life. He needed resources, both in the form of followers among the citizens and through the fast-growing black trade. Hadji felt powerful and led an extremist youth group. But to show this in society he needed cash to be able to make himself powerful in the area. The Christian group was a perfect prey. The stubborn Hadji.

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On the current day Hadji sought the Yakub family and wanted to "borrow" a large sum of money for an alleged expense for his group. He became angry when he was refused the loan. "You come to me with the money before sunset, is that okay, otherwise my guys come here", threatened Hadji and left the family. "Do you threaten us Hadji, aren't you ashamed?" "No! I am not ashamed. It is you who should be ashamed", screamed Hadji back. "If you don't stop

with this nonsense we will be forced to report you." "Oh well, how will you be able to live here then?"

After a long while of quarreling Schmunni followed Hadji to the outer door and urged him once to cut it out with his threats. Shortly after nightfall two youngsters burst into the living room where the older couple sits calmly in front of the TV. "Hand over the money otherwise we shoot your skull", threatens one of them with his pistol. "Out of here you cowardly dogs", answers Yakub bravely with a fighting spirit. But the power was not the right one to take the fight with younger people. He takes them by the shoulder and tries to push them out. One of the knaves aims his weapon at Yakub and fires two shots closely over his head. Yakub is knocked backward against the wall by the shock wave and lumps of crushed gravel from the limestone mixed with dust clouds fill the room with heart-screaming screams from Schmunni. In the ensuing chaos the criminals are seized by panic and run out. The wife goes out and calls for help for her husband and eventually a bus arrives to take Yakub to the hospital. Yakub's weak body cannot handle the strain and he sinks down and dies before the transport even begins. Yakub dbé Lalo Grigo falls victim to an idiot deed on April 28, 1990. The police arrest Hadji because he had planned the deed but despite safe evidence and many witnesses he is released free without even bringing charges against him.

Ishak Tahan, dbé Maksi Bahhe

Ishak grew up in a multi-sibling family with Christian values in a prosperous existence. The father Yakob with his sons ran a carpentry workshop with skill. Ishak was one of the city's most capable craftsmen within furniture carpentry as well as the construction industry. But the flight forced him like most youths to emigrate to Germany as a guest worker. The family settled there with the hope of a successful existence. But Ishak did not thrive with Europe's stressful life so he chose to return to the hometown, more specifically to the parental home. Times were not the same as the youth years and Ishak in his loneliness became increasingly depressed due to the hard social climate why he spent his free time mostly at the city's cafes where one came in contact with some rowdy youths. Ishak ended up with some of them and a quarrel about a trivial matter degenerated, ended up in conflict with a youth from the village of Bs, a bitter battle that ended in Ishak causing 19-year-old Kenan a severe injury that led to the young guy's death. Ishak was sentenced for manslaughter and served his sentence. After Ishak served his sentence, he was released, the murder is not clarified. After a few months, on March 23, 1991, Ishak was found dead not far from his home. An Aramean young man was arrested for the deed but for lack of evidence he was acquitted.

Fikri Akbulut, Rhawi

Fikri's father Sillo dbé Fatrus ran a business within goods trade with favorable conditions and the family invested in raising their children to successful and well-behaved citizens. Fikri was not the type to sit on the school bench and do any homework. He decided, already at an early age, to make his own decisions and build his future on his own. Fikri had his own view and own perception of social values and he was always in opposition. After military service he went to the metropolis Istanbul where he earned good money and moved among higher class

children in a life of luxury. After a few years he came back to the hometown as a completely new human with fine clothes and spoke a cultivated language so the whole city's youths envied him for his successful talents.

Fikri married one of the city's finest girls and after all the culture's arts they lived in the parental farm a while. The family moved to Switzerland hoping to start new life with new conditions in the modern society but not there either could Fikri adapt to reality. He moved back to Midyat and started new life in loneliness. Times were not the same as when he left Midyat several years earlier but he had to accept it. Fikri started a business within the parts industry with favorable incomes and he participated actively in social issues. During the time the Gulf War went on in 1991 Fikri helped on his own Syrian refugees who sought their way to Tur Abdin. With life at stake he fought to right and left to help as many as possible of stranded refugees.

In short time Fikri made his home a refugee reception for Iraqi refugees and took care of dozens needing help. Among these was a young woman with Muslim background. Gossip and rumors spread that a Muslim woman lived in Fikri's farm. It spread so widely that some Muslim fundamentalists took offense at this and to get rid of the woman they told her to leave the house to a safe place. The rumors had spread so widely and Fikri got rid of the woman as fast as he could, and with time this turned into regular threats. He was told to leave the city for his personal safety but he stood straight against all threats. Over the course of time Fikri had established a friendship relation with a schoolmate whom we can call Mahme. Later it turned out that Mahme was in secret a police agent in the prevailing anarchy society. Fikri needed Mahme for his contacts within the police and for Fikri to carry out some errands through him. Mahme acted as protector for his Christian friend, but under the surface the friendship was false. Fikri moved with large sums of money and the friendship proceeded with Mahme borrowing now and then money from his friend. After a time the sum increased and Mahme owed Fikri large sums of money.

A warm summer evening Fikri invites, as usual, his friend Mahme for dinner to regulate the debt. Mahme began by questioning some of the debts or tried not to remember when he had borrowed money from Fikri. But after some explanations and reminders about time and space Mahme says quite suddenly: "Why does Mahme change quite suddenly, but above all why did Mahme not care about the sum and agreed to everything I had said?", thought Fikri. Mahme stares at Fikri and asks if he can wait a few days to pay back the debt. "We can make a payment plan if you want," answers Fikri. "No, no, I pay everything at the same time," says Mahme with a cold smile on his lips. "Okay, my friend," says Fikri, and the pair walk the entire street until they say goodbye to each other.

The day after Mahme was not seen where they used to meet, but on the evening of June 17, 1992 Fikri sits with some comrades playing cards like all other evenings in the cafe. The clock approaches nine in the evening and it is closing time. Fikri sees through the corner of his eye a young boy from the Mahme family rise at the same time. Fikri had expected that he and the young guy would walk together homewards in the dark night. But the boy looks in his direction and runs homewards alone. Fikri begins to be thoughtful about why the boy ran

before him, but one cannot know everything in advance. He exchanges a few words with an acquaintance and leaves the cafeteria alone, he too.

From here and forward the story is only fictional: Fikri walks alone through the main street upwards and it is pitch black on the street except for a street light in the intersection. Three hundred meters further ahead upwards the street curves and it is totally dark. Fikri passes the lighting. The only thing moving and pursuing Fikri is his own shadow which goes before him and becomes longer and longer for every step he takes in opposite direction against the street lighting. His sandals' squeaking sole against the slippery street stones breaks the otherwise total silence. The still and silent night had brought the community into a deep slumber, but the seconds felt like an eternity. At the upper inn a man observes Fikri through his sharp vision when a shadow disappears through the arch to the inn's entrance. The nature reaction of terror washes his body from top to bottom. With a body reflex he stops a short while and then, with an incessantly beating heart, he continues his way. He was out almost every evening and used to take the same way home, before curfew prevailed and it was dangerous to stay out on the road. At this time curfew prevailed, especially at nights. But Fikri had previously never cared about the ban, but this evening was not like itself. The friend Mahme was not seen out and the boy who ran before him baffled his thoughts. But what awakened Fikri's suspicions even more was that from the place where he observed the shadow man one could see Mahme's house, and that it was lit every time at this time, but now it was dark and total silence. "Can the shadow man be Mahme himself? Does he want to scare me? Can he be so mean... to get rid of the debt? It can be anyone," pondered Fikri.

Fikri takes his loaded pistol from the holster and grips it ready to fire in the trouser pocket at the height of the shadow man's hiding place. "Boo!", screams Mahme and throws himself on the street. "You cursed...!", screams Fikri, "you scared the life out of me, you coward, what are you doing here on the street?" "You got scared, huh?", asks Mahme. "No, not scared, I saw you sneak in behind the corner but I was not sure if it was you." "No, I just wanted to joke, but I thought of talking to you about my debt." "Now...? Here...? No, not at this time. It is no hurry, my friend."

They talked stressfully and incoherently and his body shook like a frozen dog. He had the revolver and tried to get into the right position to carry out the deed. Fikri did not see all his movements in the darkness. A family sleeping on the roof a little further away heard the conversation but they could not understand completely what it was about since the conversation went in Aramean. The conversation went on with normal tone and the family had therefore no suspicions of improprieties. Fikri continued his journey and Mahme followed closely behind.

At the same moment two bangs were heard in quick succession. Fikri falls dead to the ground with his revolver ready to fire beside. Probably he had his hand on the revolver when he was shot. The police's first comment was that he had been shot from behind under the ear, which ruled out the suicide theory. According to the result of the site investigation and the nature of the crime and the modus operandi Mahme would have committed suicide if Fikri shot first, but after closer investigation it turned out that Fikri would have missed him with the first shot

and he knew that Fikri was armed. Mahme tried to shoot his friend from his hiding place but the coward was afraid to be shot with the first shot. Mahme's "scare joke" was involved in the silver work "Judas kiss" and the greatest betrayal. The case was never solved.

Yakub Mete, Dbe Shammosahjo, born 1955

Yakub was born and raised in the northern district with a large number of siblings and received a distinct middle-class upbringing. In adulthood, he married and formed a healthy family in the spirit of Midyat culture. The negative consequences of exile forced Yakub to fill the void left by his family and take responsibility for managing all the family's remaining assets. At the time of the shooting, he was responsible for a dozen farms and hundreds of acres belonging to relatives and neighbors.

Not only did he bear this heavy responsibility, but in the late 1970s, Yakub was also elected Muhtar (district head) for northern Midyat. His father Malke and the entire family had much to do, including renting out farms and leasing arable fields. This required considerable planning, and the contacts with tenants and leaseholders were not without friction. Yakub, together with a Muslim friend, opened a large department store in central Midyat, and business was prosperous. Despite the politically risky situation, everything was going reasonably well.

The 1980s military coup changed the entire political climate. The Muslim Brotherhood had become a strong factor in socially dangerous groups using terrorist methods that terrorized the everyday life of citizens. One morning, Yakub received a simple handwritten letter slipped under the door. According to the message, a whole range of alcoholic products was not to be sold or handled in the store. The partners took the threat with a shrug. After a few days, two young men came to the door and personally delivered the threats, giving them a deadline to stop selling the mentioned products.

Yakub and his partner contacted some gentlemen in the judiciary and discussed the matter thoroughly. The police advised them not to pay attention to the threats. The store was located next to the police station, so "they would get extra protection." This was assumed to be just verbal threats. The fundamentalists decided to kill Yakub and his partner to set an example, both for others handling alcohol and for individual smugglers. The group assigned to carry out the killing had free rein to choose the time and place, as they considered it a sacred religious duty. The guards quietly began to monitor the movements of the store owners outside the shop.

Yakub used to travel to the city of Batman to conduct his business with wholesalers. After the threats, Ammar, Yakub's partner, did not allow Yakub to travel alone outside the community. Ammar's father was a known tough guy who had good relations with local authorities in Midyat, and he believed that the fundamentalists would not dare attack Yakub if he was accompanied. In 1994, Yakub and Ammar drive together in their small truck. On February 16, to Batman. Once arrived, they go about their business and towards the afternoon they sit in the car with Yakub behind the wheel and they speed to get home before dark. Before the

car leaves the city a man comes and asks if he can get a ride to Midyat. The man looked around, but it was not the whole world he wanted; they were two and the car was only two. He just wanted a ride. The man behaved a little strangely the little while he was there. He had previously stopped next to the car and listened to the partners' conversation. They spoke Aramean which he didn't understand, but looking with the answer in hand one knows that he scouted the right person.

Yakub drives the car slowly and looks at the same time through the rearview mirror at the man who wanted a ride. The man stops in the middle of the street and looks at them until they disappear from sight. Yakub exchanges a few words with Ammar about the man and his strange behavior, but one cannot live in fear and the pair change topic and drive on.

At the mouth to the bridge in Hasno dKifo Yakub sees a young man among the crowd approach them and asks the same question, that is if he may get a ride towards Midyat, at the same time as the man pushes on and studies the partners carefully. Yakub answers briskly no. The man takes a turn around the car and notes the license plate. He writes the number on a piece of paper and disappears in the crowd. While the gentlemen make a shorter break with a tea glass at the cafeteria, Yakub follows in his worry the young man's movements in the open square. The man pulls towards the cafeteria opposite and stays there. A little later Yakub sees the man walk on a side street and speak through a walkie-talkie in hand. This call awakens even more suspicions so Yakub informs his friend about the man's call, but there was not much to do.

The partners sit in the car and with extra caution they drive homewards. In the village Gercus all vehicle traffic used to gather to go with "tree escort" convoy under protection. This was carried out twice a day and mostly this happened at night. The partners did not have much time to wait and they wanted to get home quickly. The road between Gercus and Midyat is only twenty kilometers and it usually is well trafficked during daytime. The road goes through an open landscape and no armed groups exist by the roadside. Furthermore this road stretch was not known for any incidents. They gather themselves bravely and speed homewards. A few kilometers ahead they see a red car driving quite slowly. Ammar tells Yakub to speed up and not care about the red car. But the car ahead has engine problems which belonged to commonalities and motorists were helpful. The red car stops in the middle on the narrow track and blocks traffic completely. Stressed Yakub shifts down but he doesn't make it and is forced to brake powerfully and stops behind before he could act clearly. A well-groomed young man steps out of the red car and signals to Yakub to stop. The man is well-dressed with a long coat and cap and looks like he has something under the arm. But he approaches the car behind with a friendly smile. No other cars are seen from any direction. A little sparse snow covers the mountain peaks but otherwise it is beautiful landscape, beautiful weather with typical February weather. But the moment of fear doesn't let thoughts go further than the man and his fast approach towards them.

Ammar bends down and picks up his revolver ready to fire and hides it a little under him. By that time the man stands in the middle of the street a meter from Yakub. He bends a little and studies the partners' appearance so he has the right persons in front of him. "Is it you who are

called Yakub?", asks the man. "Yes", answers Ammar fast and takes his revolver under the arm to step out of the car. The man's automatic weapon was ready to fire with finger on the trigger, under his long coat, before Ammar has time to open the car door the man shoots straight on more than ten shots in rapid rate so Yakub and the partner are mowed down instantly. The man runs to his car and disappears quickly. The day after Yakub was buried in the Christian cemetery and Ammar in the Muslim. The perpetrators are unknown and the case got no clarity.

Adver Tanriver, born 1938

Adver is born and raised in an educated family with old roots in Midyat. The father Barsaumo dbe Maloke was an eloquent gentleman and respected by both Christians and Muslims in society. He agitated in gatherings about coexistence and tolerance among ethnic groups. Barsaumo had modern visions about the mosaic society's cultural riches. In his world there were no religious boundaries but the boundaries were between knowledge and the rotten oppressor society that the feudal system had created. Barsaumo had great knowledge within the medical profession why he wanted to educate his children to doctors, and despite difficult times he succeeded in doing so. Adver came back to Midyat after studies in medicine like a gift from above; a fine, handsome and young doctor in right time. A doctor to the ever growing population was very sought after, not least an educated and licensed Midyat boy in doctor's uniform. Adver spoke all the area's languages and knew the area's typical diseases. Older people and widows with scarce resources could in their distress visit him without language problems. People who lacked payment ability got treatment and even could get some tablets for free. The rumor spread fast about the good man and shortly the queue to his reception grew several meters out on the street. Adver was deeply engaged in social issues and therefore he had a wide circle of friends but also enemies unfortunately. In the 1970s Adver's popularity lay at the top. He moved in the strong group among the official people and other celebrities in the society's highest layer. The flight's negative consequences created a new life situation for the Christian population. Adver became feathers in the hat among Midyat's establishment. He could assert his existence. In the Turkish-Kurdish conflict Adver was forced to meet the state's demands in the first place, but then he must also be a doctor. This interplay did not go problem-free. In his professional practice he came in contact with some difficult situations, but he was wise enough to handle these.

Muslim fundamentalists had cleared Yakub Mete and partner Ammar out of the way, which they had succeeded with in banning alcohol sales in Midyat. Now fundamentalists came up with a new idea; to kill Doctor Adver and some key persons to scare the rest of the Christian inhabitants to flight. Adver worked halftime at the regiment and he was the military's responsible doctor for autopsies, which is why he had some protection by the military. He was always armed, as a safety measure, but Adver was not afraid and moved freely in the central city until late evenings. Adver had no potential enemies and no one thought that anyone would want to aim a weapon at him because he was everyone's doctor and he practiced his profession with great responsibility.

Adver had been violated during his professional practice a few times but the assessment was made that it was verbal threats that one didn't care about. He could have received personal bodyguards if needed but Adver didn't want such protection. He didn't want to live in fear all the time. Adver had built a garage in the ground floor where he put his car and went up to the apartment through indoor stairs. He himself did not experience himself threatened.

The bandits who had planned his death began to clarify his movements and the street, but fundamentalists didn't want to destroy their relations with the military power, for they had a good cooperation with the military. Therefore they wanted to choose the place and a suitable time for the deed. They could have killed him in the middle of the day but chose the murder in utmost secrecy.

A murderer trio meets in peace and quiet and plans the deed in detail to minimize the risk of being pointed out at a possible arrest. The deed would be carried out late at night and near the home. Evenings the city's streets were deserted. A street lamp shone on the alley where the perpetrators would run after they carried out the deed and it is just to cut the electric cable and lay the entire alley in darkness before the operation. One of them lived five hundred meters from Adver, and there all murder plans were crafted. Weapon with silencer was acquired and the perpetrators were prepared to with the help of completely unexpected support carry out the deed. The plans were fine-tuned in detail and it was the right occasion. While the perpetrators waited, Adver used to come home late and it would fit well.

Adver and one of his friends, whom we here can call Yavuz, had quarreled at the military casino where some alcohol was also consumed. Yavuz squabbled with Adver and under the alcohol's effect Adver scolded him in front of some acquaintances. Sadly enough the restaurant staff was forced to throw out Yavuz. An angry and furious Yavuz came to Midyat's cafes and spewed out lots of threats against Adver. The fundamentalists saw this as an excellent opportunity to use and sought out Yavuz themselves and told about their intentions during the coming days. A mutual friend who was an officer did however a good deed and brought the friends together and the small discord at the casino was settled. After a few days Yavuz was invited to a birthday party in Estel.

Now appeared a suitable opportunity to "bring together" the murderers with their victim. Yavuz invited friend Adver with him to the party and after a certain hesitation Adver accepted the invitation. "Satan's messenger" informed the executioners about the party evening's time and space. On December 18, 1994 Adver takes his "friend" with him in the car and together they go to the party. The party participants draw a sigh of joy when they see the doctor with his friend and that both were happy. Happy Adver to be at the party and to show that he and Yavuz were friends again. And a happy Yavuz to participate in the preparations for Adver's murder.

The party proceeds in joyful intoxication and around nine in the evening Adver wants to say thank you and go home, but Yavuz has drunk himself intoxicated and wants to stay a while longer. Yavuz was not like himself that evening. He drank unusually much and alternated in mood. One moment he was laughingly happy to the next moment be tearfully sad; a

remarkable behavior. In his intoxication he went up several times to Adver with tears in his eyes, kissed him on the cheeks and the friends began to gesture to each other that it was time to say goodbye to him.

Shortly before ten Yavuz leaves the party a little unsteady with Adver holding him. He is stressed and shaking inside and speaks incoherently. There was something that didn't fit with him, but he is just drunk, thought the crowd. The car ride home takes a few minutes and the doctor wants to conduct a little conversation, but it didn't work because the friend was fully loaded. Or is he acting to hide the betrayal? — "Shall I drive you to the door?" asks Adver. — "No thanks, I get off as usual here at the intersection," answers Yavuz. — "Pull yourself together, so the lady doesn't beat you," jokes Adver. — "No way, would she even dare," said Yavuz, and hung on the doctor and kissed him with a deadly look. — "Okay then, that's enough, see you tomorrow," says Adver.

Yavuz turns around with fixed and lifeless gaze on his friend but boiling inside of his difficult secret. He wanted to say a last word but he swallows it and slams the car door. Yavuz's difficult secret. He stops a while as if he would regret, but he had heard the story of Judas' betrayal and followed it. The thoughts cut him in pieces and his conscience plagues him while he walks home.

Adver drives the last bit to the small square outside the home, makes a U-turn like other times to come right to the garage entrance. He looks around a little. It is a little bright on the square and the alley upwards shone when he went earlier. Cloudy night with a little wind and drizzle. The only thing heard during the fateful moment are some loose cables hitting by the wind against the worn electric pole. The wife hears the car so she turns on the lamp on the balcony but the lamp shines only on the balcony on the second floor. The frightening darkness out there becomes even darker but Adver is used to coming home at this time. Adver pulls up the brake, steps out of the car and opens the garage door to drive the car in.

Two hundred meters away on the narrow alley lives the shepherd Simko in a shed with his small family and the watchdog. Late evenings like this the dog usually is quiet locked in the stable but this night the dog barks uninterruptedly. It seems that the poor doggie has protested tirelessly a longer while but late in the evening rests an eerie dark silence along the alley and it is a sign from his stable. Adver stops for a while with one hand on the car door and intends to take up the revolver which lies ready to fire under the car seat. Why doesn't the street lamp shine...? Why is the poor dog not quiet like this? The wife comes to the balcony edge and tells him not to linger long there, the dog had whined since the street had been darkened.

It is pitch black inside the garage. Adver turns off the car engine, pulls up the handbrake, opens the door and goes out but before he has time to look around he sees figures right behind him. The first thought he gets in the head is that the figures can be acute patients which belonged to the profession and such happened sometimes. Adver comes towards them to see who they are but before he has time to walk around the car one of the men who is closest to him aims his Kalashnikov at him, takes two quick steps forward and empties the magazine with more than twenty shots instantly. The other accomplice walks around the car's

front and from close range fires a few shots towards the already dead doctor's head and completely ice-cold they walk upwards through the darkened alley.

"What time..?", thinks Adver before dying. Yavuz has reached home by this time but he cannot keep his secret. He succumbs and tells the wife that he had heard some stories about Judas' betrayal. The doctor was so badly mangled that the autopsy personnel had difficulty recognizing him. The wife tries to calm him down in his drunkenness and about continuing the discussion in the morning. "No", he says, hitting and kicking around him. Yavuz tells the wife to ring the doctor's family and ask if he has come home. The wife hesitates and doesn't want to ring this late at night but rings anyway. The call comes to the family minutes after the shots. A terrified wife holds her children and sits far into the room completely horrified, screaming for help. While Yavuz's wife tries to calm her down the police arrives and sees the grotesque sight. Adver was executed with more than twenty shots. The Adver case, like all other cases above, was never solved.

DIPLOMACY BEFORE FIGHT – p. 195

In Midyat's cultural tradition people chose to solve their conflicts with diplomacy instead of violence. This was a tradition among the Christian Arameans. The clergy was an important element in the context.

Djidjo Galle Rhawi and Tuma Halaf were childhood friends and lived peacefully as neighbors. Both belonged to the same congregation and were liked by everyone. At youth years both were tough, athletic like gladiators on each side. In spare time, Sunday afternoons, the youths used to gather in groups and wrestle with each other to pass time. Djidjo's and Tuma's wrestling match was played last and it was the most sought-after match of all.

Young Djidjo had a mysterious illness and a seer advised him to sleep a night by the saint Mor Malke's grave at the monastery. But during this frightening overnight stay Djidjo needed a company in case he would flare up in sleep. Tuma stood up voluntarily and he handled his assignment exemplarily. The friends Djidjo and Tuma were in the monastery according to the fortune teller's instructions and, incredibly enough, Djidjo recovered against all odds.

During adulthood the gentlemen ruffled each other a few times but both were wise enough to end the fight without hurting each other. Regrettably the gentlemen happened in the end of the 1950s to become parties in a clan feud and in the heat of battle Tuma and Djidjo beat each other properly. This big fight ended in a peace agreement with the congregation priest Makko Avrohum's great efforts. But the friendship between Djidjo and Tuma had been damaged to the degree that they stopped greeting kindly to each other.

After a few years a normal day Mr. Tuma herded his sheep near Djidjo's vineyard. During the summer heat's afternoon, while Tuma took a nap in nice shade, a cluster of his sheep grazed unguarded in a grape plantation belonging to Djidjo and destroyed the bushes. Tuma discovered the mistake which is why he left the place fast to avoid being confronted with Djidjo. A shepherd nearby had told Djidjo about the case. Djidjo was not a stingy nature, this

did not pass Djidjo completely unnoticed and a shepherd who had noticed this. But the person to the degree that he would cause trouble for a few bunches of grapes? He suspected also that Tuma knew that Djidjo had heard who destroyed the plantation. It was not like Djidjo to keep silent about injustices even if it was trifles. He had expected an apology from Tuma himself, but none came. No, it was not time for fight. Family relations were sensitive and this could lead to larger conflict. The wounds from the big fight were newly healed and therefore Djidjo went to the congregation priest Makko Avrohum and told about his intended feud with Tuma.

"My dearest brother, you shall never think of violence, I shall solve the problem," said the priest father. "Oh, oh, I am worried to lose reputation in front of the neighborhood," said Djidjo. "No then, let me take care of the case, I solve it with God's will," said the priest father.

He assessed quickly Djidjo's economic loss and took out his savings box, but before the priest opened his mouth about possible compensation Djidjo intervened. "No, father, I am not out for any money, I want a public apology from Tuma." "Well, listen to what I shall say. I handle this in my way," and tried to hand two and a half lira to Djidjo for the actual losses. The apology would come later, promised the priest. "Take the money!" said the priest. "No, I don't want any money." "Well, it is your money, but if you don't want them there is a great need for them. We have a newly moved-in widow with large family and I will give the money to her." "Well, father, take them there and you get just as much from me that you can leave to the poor lady." "Thanks for the help," said the priest and happily put five lira in the alms box.

The priest tried to do his utmost to get Mr. Djidjo to calm down, but it was not simple. The priest had Djidjo under his supervision a whole week at the same time as he worked for a public apology. Not only that, but when Tuma heard that Djidjo had the priest father's charity behind him, he also became more willing to solve the conflict. Tuma was a simple type, but finally the priest succeeded in pressing Tuma to donate the damages sum two and a half lira and just as much to the priest father's charity fund. So Tuma didn't want to be less generous. But what the priest father became most happy about was that directly after the service on Sunday Tuma and Djidjo would publicly forgive each other in Christ's name. It became so, and the whole saga ended peacefully.

THE FLIGHT'S HUNDREDS CHRONOLOGY – p. 197

The Ittihat party's ethnic cleansing barbarism 1915 created an earthquake of murder, terror, starvation and mass flight like no other. History is not finished written as long as the perpetrators deny. For a hundred years the flight has been a bitter memory that we all have tasted. After Seyfo the Turabdin people fled south to Mosul, Aleppo, Beirut with further flight to Greece, USA and Latin America.

During the interwar period there was a little slowdown. In 1942, in connection with (*Ihtiyat* and *varlik vergisi*) and following starvation the flight took speed again until the middle of the 1950s. 1971, "Sabri & Gül"-event, started the flight route this time to Europe and above all to Sweden. Centuries of constant fear and persecutions were carved into people's soul with

panic and anxiety. Sweden gave refuge to the Arameans, this was like a gift from above, better living conditions (and freedom to live undisturbed) fueled the flight route.

The right to express oneself freely became reality first in Sweden, associations with different activity direction grew like mushrooms here and there in a short time. The Aramean extended family which was scattered throughout the Middle East, found each other again in Södertälje and the identity question which was forgotten became quite suddenly a hot question in everyone's mouth. Furthermore everyone could express themselves loudly and freely. In the shadow of this chaos some active youths formed the first publicly registered organization in Sweden's history with headquarters in Södertälje. But how? Which name? Who becomes chairman? Without creating more commotion the group's prominent gentlemen came to the conclusion to form an association under the name: **ASSYRISKA KULTURFÖRENINGEN** (Assyrian Cultural Association)

First board consisted of Shemun Ghanno, Georg Melek, Melek Kino, Besim Aho, Sabri Haffo, Samuel Ezzo, Nail Tasci. (Note! Everyone is from Midyat.) The association was launched without major conflicts, after a year the group had become multiples larger with newly arrived refugees. Ilyas Sahin, ADO's Sweden-responsible, with some comrades took over the association and formed new board of the following: Gabriel Afram, Gabro Isik, Simon Hadruli, Iljas Sahin, Arsan Arsan, Sabri Haffo and Lena Haffo.

The question about forming a publicly registered congregation with priest and church board came up seriously. The bow that was loaded during hot discussions was here fired with full force. The conflict Assyrian-Syriac became a fact. Feelings were much more tense than in the association case. The church's name? Much hotter question than the association's. To end the name conflict some youths acquired in well-meaning a sheet metal beam and simply wrote a sign: **ASSYRISKA MOR AFREM KYRKAN** and hung it up without asking the big family representatives. Oh, oh, what a crime!! Biggest heresy after the flood!! To call the church Assyrian was a great insult against religious circles and emotionally charged, hot and hateful conflict that took far too large resources in a question which, one could read locally without any effort, became an evil. All this was steered by some power-hungry persons with the churchmen's blessing.

In wearisome discussions the new congregation was formed and the first board members became the following: Shemun Ghanno, Sabri Aho, Gevriye Haffo, Hanna Tahan, Lahad Abdiyo, Musa Mala and Gebro Yemen.

The year after the patriarch himself came to Sweden with the purpose that he in his power would ban everything classified Assyrian among the people. Youths who called themselves Assyrians would be excluded from the church totally. A personal great pressure was exercised on the patriarch to end the Assyrian national movement. Some hate-old-men considered the Assyrian national movement as a threat to the church and the patriarch in his power would put a stop to this. But it didn't turn out so.

The patriarch was frail sick of his obesity. The holy man's visit cost several hundred thousand and he returned satisfied and calm with his clinking luggage. At the same time as we were greeting each other here in Södertälje there were in USA churches registered by the name Assyrian, with the holy patriarch's good memory. But this holy man's good memory was disconnected for the moment and exactly in this question. Instead of solving the conflict as ultimately responsible church father, he sensed the people's feelings in question and ability to pay. Whereupon he kept the cauldron boiling for further discussions.

In 1980 **Shemun Abdiyo** was killed in a bitter local conflict resolution. Discussions went along the line between Assyrian and the newly created name Syriac (*Syrianska*). 1989 the diocese was split after protracted conflicts between the bishop on one side and fundamentalists on the other side. The church was divided into two phalanxes. Bishop had the right on his side. Groups ran past each other back and forth to Damascus in constant battle. The group that was there last and had the fattest, thickest envelope with cash had the right on its side. All this grueling and self-created conflict with gigantic resource waste, the heritage after the diocese's holy good memory...

1969 came a young man in monk attire to Södertälje, he presented himself as **Afram Abboude**. The man had studied in Soviet and recently taken steps to the holy assignment, and he was Iraqi citizen. That was all one knew about him. Afram oriented himself primarily among youths and promised to lead the Aramean ethnic group. The group's all interests in Assyrian national spirit, "The church exists for the people," he said on several occasions. Oh!! what a blessing, were the first comments. This monk father is a gift from above. Afram stayed three months in Sweden and returned to Damascus, where he submitted a detailed report about his Sweden trip: "The vast majority of Arameans in Sweden are from Turabdin and blindly faithful to their church fathers."

The program to form a Syriac Orthodox diocese as enclaves was started as well as binding this diocese as vassal to the patriarch office in Damascus. The year after the patriarch himself came to Sweden and evaluated the situation's long-term nature. Patriarch Yakub the third, in cooperation with and under insight of the Baath party's corrupt representatives, launched the program.

1973 Afram Abboude came to Sweden, and now as metropolitan and thus the newly formed diocese's spiritual leader. Afram lived life on the outskirts of the people. He liked life and drank alcohol when the opportunity appeared. Simultaneously with this he busied himself with his secret assignment, namely to divide and rule the group as well as report in details partly to the patriarch and partly to the Syrian embassy in Stockholm.

The conflict Assyrian-Syriac took off with the consequence that the parties sent messengers in constant shuttle traffic to Damascus to bribe forth the right to their side. After ten years Afram was revealed and kicked out of the diocese. He was an informer to the embassy. The name Afram was false (real name was Jamil). The priest sources were a play for the gallery. The damage was already done. Several million kronor of the faithful Turabdin people went up in smoke and with gigantic time losses.

THE COVER IMAGE'S SAGA (Page 199)

Days before the Easter weekend 1942 all men between 20–45 years (just over 400 from Midyat) were called to *IHTIYAT-RESERVIST SERVICE* but in reality labor camps in inner Anatolia. The same day early in the morning evil's drums (*davul-zurna*) were heard sounding loud in central Midyat. In threat of collective punishment of all families all called-up appeared with Ibrahim Shabo at the head at the gathering place. With half a loaf of bread and a black olive in hand began the death march from the Halkevi house. First night in the village of Apshe and the day after to Mardin. The picture was taken before further march in the Cathedral's yard – Forty Martyrs Church. During the march in Mardin Mahalmi women gathered on the rooftops and sang songs in Mahalmi-Arabic for Midyat's youths:

Kumu tlacu tfarracu cala midyadiye, (Stand up, go out and look at the Midyat people) *Silbanin beyn gbinin killin mesihiye*, (Crosses between their eyes/foreheads, all are Christians) *Nikkarateyn kiddamin u bayrak cumhuriye*, ([Guards/Police] in front of them and the Republic's flag) *Brahim Shabo fi rasin rais agaviye*, (Brahim Shabo at their head, chief [of chiefs?]) etc.